THE VVAY,

To convert a SINNER;

AND

To recover a Back-ſlider;

AND

To ſtrengthen thoſe that ſtand.

Wherein is held forth,

That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the new and living way, the true and onely way, the ſafe and ſure way, a peaceable and pleaſant way: Firſt to bring a Sinner out of a ſtate of nature into a ſtate of grace; Secondly, to raiſe up that which was fallen, and bring home that which was loſt; Laſtly, to ſupport the weak.

ALSO

The nature of each of theſe States, the Trials of it, the way of attaining it, the Remedy of it, the Inducements to it.

By *Robert Purnel.*

Joh. 10.9. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved.*

Joh. 14.6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.*

Act 4.12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given amongſt men where-by we muſt be ſaved.*

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them from eternal freedom. Now the only way and means whereby fallen man may come out of this ſoul-famiſhing and ſoul-periſhing dungeon, into the glorious liberty and unſpeakable felicity of the *ſons of God*, I have in this enſuing Diſcourſe laboured & endeavoured, according to that little light and experience that God hath given me, to point at the way of recovery; namely, how a man or woman may, by the aſsiſtance of the Almighty, lay hold on eternal life, and have an aſſurance of the pardon of all their ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come; by that new, and living, true, and onely way Jeſus Chriſt, *in whom are all treaſures*

of

of wiſdom and knowledge, in whom all the fulnes of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, in whom all the promiſes are yea & amen. No coming to God the Father; but by him: no prayers anſwered, but what are made in his name, by the help of the Holy Spirit: no righteouſneſs will be accepted with God, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: no entring into heaven but at door Ieſus Chriſt: no ſaving knowledge in any, unleſs they know Ieſus Chriſt, and him crucified for them: no laying hold on him, but by faith; no believing in him, without hearing of him: and how ſhall they heare without a Preacher? and how ſhall they preach, if they be ſent of Prelacie

and Presbyterie, and not of God, who only doth ſend thoſe whom he will own & bleſs, giving them the tongue of the learned, that they ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary, and preach the Goſpel firſt (not the Law) to the poor; to heal that which is ſick, and to bind up that which is broken, and to ſeek that which was loſt, and bring back that which was driven away; to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to ſupport the weak.

1. For the Converſion of a ſinner; the Lord cals them to come unto him.

2. He aſſureth them they ſhall be

be welcom, and not be caſt off.

3. Chriſt becometh a Surety for them.

4. He entreth into covenant to make good every Promiſe to all that come to him.

5. He confirmeth it by an oath, that he meaneth as he ſpeaketh.

6. To put all out of doubt, he ſeals his promiſes, his covenant, and oath, with the blood of his Son.

7. If all this will not do it, he ſtandeth at the door & knocketh, and waiteth that he may be gracious unto you and me: And if all this will not doe, he leaveth us without excuſe, and telleth us, that our deſtruction is of our ſelves.

Then ſecondly, for the recovering of of a Backſlider:

1. The Lord comes and convinceth him that he is backſliden.

2. He calleth the Backſlider to come unto him.

3. He doth undertake for him, and promiſe to heal him.

4. When the Backſlider is upon coming to his Father, his Father goeth and meeteth him.

5. He kiſſeth him.

6. He clotheth him with the beſt robe, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Thirdly, for the ſtrengthening, ſtabliſhing, and confirming thoſe that ſtand:

1. He biddeth them abide in him. 2. He

2. He promiſeth them, that the gates of hell ſhall not prevaile againſt them.

3. That when they are falling, he will uphold them.

Theſe and many other things thou haſt laid before thee in the enſuing Treatiſe. Firſt read, and then judge ; and the Lord give thee and me underſtanding in all things.

I remain, for the Lord,

Thine,

R. P.

THE WAY

To convert a SINNER,

AND

To recover a *Back-slider*, and to strengthen, and to build up a weak *Believer*.

THat sinners have been, now are, and hereafter shall be converted, is granted on all hands: what conversion, and turning to God is, is also well understood by many: but whether

ther it be the preaching of the Law: or elſe the preaching of the Goſpel, that doth effectually work this great work in the Creature, it is in diſpute with ſome. The one party ſay, that the Law muſt firſt be preached to fire ſinners out of their neſts, & then the Goſpel to heal them: the other hold the Goſpel is firſt to be preached to ſinners, and if they reject that, then the Law.

The firſt, that ſay the Law ought firſt to be preached to ſinners before the Goſpel, bring theſe and the like Scriptures, *Rom.* 7.7. *I had not known ſin but by the Law*; for by the Law is the knowledge of ſin. *Pſal.*19.7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.*

The other party, that hold the Goſpel ought firſt to be preached to ſinners, for proof, bring theſe and the like Scriptures, *Mark* 16.15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Goſpel unto every creature*: And *Luk.*10.5. *And into whatſoever*

soever house ye enter, first say, peace be to this house. So the Gospel is to be published to all without limitation or restriction, 1 Ep. *Joh.* 2. 1. & 2. & *Phil.* 2. 16. & 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. & 6. &c.

And for mine own part I must confess, I have had many serious thoughts, and spent many hours in turning over the leaves of Gods revealed will, and have endeavoured to read, and to understand what I have read, and to affect what I understand, and to believe what I could affect, and to treasure up what I do believe, and now to communicate what I did treasure up: (or else these lines had not come to publique view) and my thoughts are, that the Gospel is first to be preached, and that to every creature; for I finde that though by the Law is the knowledge of sin, yet notwithstanding a man cannot see his sins fully but by Gospel-light: it is the work of the Spirit to convince of sin. *I will* (saith Christ) *send you another comforter*

[mean:

(meaning the Spirit) *and he shall convince the world of sin.* And where doth the Spirit breathe but in the Gospel? *Received ye the Spirit* (saith the Apostle) *by the works of the Law, or by the preaching of faith?* In the 7th. of *Luke* 37, 38. A woman (as we read) came to Christ, though she had been a great sinner, and she washed his feet with her tears, &c. what made her do so? the Text answereth, *She loved much*, ver. 47. *because much was forgiven her.* Zech. 12. 10. *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn as one mourneth for his only son, &c.*

1. Here is the cause or ground of their repentance in these words, and they shall look upon *Christ* whom their sins have pierced.

2. Here is the effect of that cause, they mourned.

3. They repented: here is the degree of their repentance, *They shall mourn as one mourneth for his only son.*

There

There be many Reasons why the Gospel should be first preached.

1. Because the Gospel hath a spiritual vertue in it, and power to draw the heart, and work upon the soul. *Cant.* 6. 1. compared with *Cant.* 5. 9, 10, &c.

2. It is not so much the thing that is preached, as the thing that God will bless: but his blessing and presence goeth with the Gospel, *Mat.* 28. 20.

3. The Commission that Christ hath given, is to go and *preach the Gospel to every creature*; not to Saints only, but to Sinners also, to every creature, *Mar.* 16. 15.

4. Because that the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised his presence to accompany those that preach the Gospel, saying, *Lo, I am with you to the end of the world.*

5. We find that the Apostles did so whereever they came. *Philip* did so, as you may see *Act.* 8. 5. *Paul* did so, *Act.* 17. 13. So again; 1 *Cor.* 15. 3. *Paul* giveth

us

us an accompt not only what he did preach, but what the Spirit of God in him did cause him to preach; first; saying, *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received of the Lord, how that Christ dyed for our sins, according to the Scriptures.* Nay, Christ preached the Gospel to *Zacheus* in the first place, *Luk.*19,5,6,7,8.

Are there not a generation of men in these our dayes, grown wiser then our Lord Christ and his Apostles? and although they do not in word say so, yet in effect they do so esteem of themselvs. Christ and the Apostles preached the Gospel, and understand the Law in a Gospel-way, bringing types and shadows into substances, and so refine worship and government: And the Scriptures call upon people to refine all their duties, and all their graces, and all their comforts, and all their assurance, and to act from an Evangelical principle; not so much to have the fear of punishment

to

to compel, as the love of Christ to constrain them to walk in newness of life. The Gospel is a ministration of life, and the ministration of the Law is called a ministration of condemnation. In a word, the Gospel is called a glorious Gospel; for the Lord speaks to us in it by his Son, *Heb.*1.1,2,3.

Well, but for all this, are not most men crying and calling for *Moses* to fit and prepare them for the Gospel? and if the Word of this Kingdom, to wit, the Gospel, come neer them, they run away from it, saying, Oh, it belongeth not to me! I am not so and so qualified, I am not so and so broken, I am not so and so weary and heavy laden; and therefore these Gospel-promises pertain not unto me. And thus many be kept in bondage on the one hand; and on the other, many thousands are made to believe they be Christians, and that their state is good, when there is but a seeming faith and re-

repentance wrought in them by a common illumination, or humane resolution, but not by the Spirit of God in effectual vocation; they have not yet had the graces of the Spirit of God wrought in them in power. It is one thing for a man to be troubled in Conscience, and another thing to be humbled for sin committed: it is one thing for a man to be pricked in heart, and another thing for a man to repent: it is one thing for a man to repent of sin in regard of the mischief and inconvenience that doth come thereby, and another thing to grieve for the moral evil of it. Again, it is one thing for a man to be broken with the weight of sin, and another thing to have his bones broken, and his soul melted for it, *Psal.* 51. 8. Lastly, it is one thing to have grief, sorrow, and repentance to be more in view, sense and noise, and another thing to be more in spirit, and in profit.

Now if the Gospel were powerfully and

and purely preached, the people that hear it would find it to be either *a quick and powerful word, sharper then a two-edged sword, dividing between the marrow and the joynts*, and so making a through-work upon the soul; or else on the other hand, it would leave them without excuse.

And that the Gospel ought to be tendered to the worst of sinners, even while they are in their sins, I suppose it will further appear in these and the like Scriptures following. Consider that place in the Gospel, and the invitation to the great Supper: the servants are sent forth to call in those that were bidden, and they excuse themselves; well, He sends out again, and invites others; *Go to the high-wayes, go to the hedges, and compell them to come in.* So *Rev.* 3. 20. Christ stands at the door, and knocks; *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him.* Christ doth stand here knocking by the voice of the

Goſpel, and offers the greateſt mercies that can be enjoyed in this word, Fellowſhip and Communion; *I will come in and ſup with him.* So again, *Prov.* 9. 1. *Wiſdom hath built her an houſe, ſhe hath killed her beaſts, ſhe hath mingled her wine, ſhe hath furniſhed her table.*

Obj. For whom? (may ſome ſay.)

Anſ. *Prov.* 9. 4, 5. *Whoſo is ſimple, let him come in hither; and let him that wanteth underſtanding, come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled.* All that have the Spirit of God (the onely key) to unlock and unfold theſe Scriptures, they cannot but ſee abundance of unſpeakable love in the moſt wiſe Creator to the poor, forlorn, nothing creature. We are in our blood; there is our ſtate: it is a time of love with him; there is his ſtate. We will not, though in miſery, ſeek for remedy; there is our ſtate many times: *I am found of them that ſought me not*; there is his mercy. See *Act.* 8. 35. The firſt thing

that

that *Philip* preached to the *Ethiopian* Eunuch was the Gospel; and, *Philip preached unto him Jesus, &c.* If a sinner should see at once all his sins with their nature, number, and aggravations, he could never look upon them but with *Cain* and *Judas* despairing, as *Gen.*4.13. & *Mat.*27.3, 4, 5.

The sight of sin discovered by the Law, without the sight of Free-grace, love and goodness of God, held forth in the Gospel, will rather drive a sinner from God, then bring him to God; for in these Gospel-days it is not so much the sight of sin, as the sight of love, grace, goodness, and glory, that will lead a sinner to Repentance, and humble him for his sin; *Luk.*7.42.47. & *Zech.* 12.10. & *Rom.*2.4. & *Isa.*6.5. And that the Gospel is first to be preached to sinners, is clear by the command of *Christ*, *Luk.*10.5. and in *Mat.*16.15.

And according to this Commission, the Apostles went and preached the

Gospel to the worst of sinners, *Acts* 2. 22 to 37. & *Act.* 8. 12. & 1 *Cor.* 15. 3.

Object. *The Law should be preached* First, *to convince of sin, and after that the Gospel.*

Answ. 1. The way of Christ is to preach the Gospel first to every creature.

2. The Gospel rightly preached through the assistance of the Spirit, doth sufficiently convince of sin: it is impossible to preach Christ dying for sinners, but there is a sufficient means of conviction: See 2 *Cor.* 10. 14.

It is the Spirit of Christ that convinceth of sin, and this Spirit is given forth in the Ministry of Faith, and not of the Law, *Gal.* 3. 2. & *Joh.* 16. 8.

Quest. *What is it then to preach the Gospel?*

Answ. To preach the Gospel, is to preach Christ to the People.

Quest. *What is it to preach Christ to the People?*

Ans.

Answ. 1. To set forth and to declare by the Scripture, what

He is, and what he hath done for poor sinners.

2. To preach Christ, is to declare to sinners, what a glorious fulness there is in him, a remedy for every malady, *Isa.* 45.24. *In the Lord have we righteousness and strength.*

3. To preach Christ, is to clear up to all sinners the way of common interest; how thou, as a sinner, mayst come to have a share in him, seeing he came to call and to heal such.

4. To preach Christ, is to set forth to the world, the necessity of being born again, of being out of the stock of old *Adam*; and of being grafted into the new stock the last *Adam*.

5. To preach Christ, is to declare and hold forth the certainty of salvation to every one that doth believe in him; for he shall be kept by the mighty power of God; the gates of hell

ſhall not prevail againſt him, nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate him from Chriſt.

6. To preach Chriſt, is to hold forth to all men, what bleſſed priviledges a poor ſinner hath aſſoon as ever he believeth, and is come to Chriſt; he hath an intereſt in all the bleſſings promiſed in the Goſpel.

7. To preach Chriſt, is to demonſtrate and publiſh to all men the certainty of damnation eternal to all thoſe that do ſlight Chriſt, and live and die in a ſtate of unbelief.

8. To preach Chriſt, is to manifeſt to every ſoul that hath received *Jeſus Chriſt*, how he ſhould walk in him, denying himſelf, and mortifying his ſin: all through Chriſt enabling him. In a word,

1. Whatſoever doth tend to the exalting of *Chriſt*, this is to preach *Chriſt*.

2. Whatſoever doth tend to lead ſinners to *Chriſt*, is to preach *Chriſt*.

3. What

3. Whatsoever doth tend to build up a soul in Christ, is to preach Christ; but the Gospel doth all this, therefore the Gospel is first to be preached;

1. The way to convert a sinner.
2. The way to recover a Back-slider.
3. The way to confirm, strengthen, and establish those that stand.

1. The way to convert a sinner; and herein (with submission to better judgements) I shall give my thoughts.

The first step towards heaven is to see our selves at the gates of Hell: the way to get wisdom, is first to see our selves fools: the way to get Christ is to see our want of Christ: the way to be rich, is to see our selves poor and blind, and miserable and naked: and that every mothers son of us were born children of wrath, conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, is clear by the stock from whence we sprung, old *Adam* our father: so that we may now break forth and say, O Father *Adam*, what hast

haſt thou done? for though it was thou that didſt ſin, yet thou art not fallen alone, but we all that came of thee, *Rom.* 5.12.

Can a man bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one, *Iob* 14.4. & *Iob* 25.4. *If any man ſay he hath no ſin, he deceiveth himſelf, and the truth is not in him*, 1 *Ioh.*. 1.8. *Pſal.* 51.5. & *Iob* 40.4. & *Rom.* 7.24. & *Pſal.* 58.3. & *Prov.* 22, 15. & *Gen.* 6.5. & *Rom.* 7.18. This is the ſtate of all men.

Then conſider, *They that are whole need not a Phyſitian, but they that are ſick*, as in *Mat.* 9.12, & *Mark* 2.17. & *Luk.* 5. 31. & *Luk.* 5.32. *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to Repentance*, Mat. 18.11. *I came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.*

Chriſt is the wiſe Phyſitian of the ſoul; he can heal ſpeedily, eaſily, perfectly, and eternally.

The people in *Acts* 2.37. never brake forth ſaying, *Men and brethren what ſhall*

we do to be saved? untill they saw themselves in a lost undone condition, which was wrought upon them by *Peters* preaching Christ unto them. The Jailor, *Act.*16.30. never enquired the way to salvation, untill the Lord had brought him into a lost condition, by a great fear that fell upon him. A man must see his malady, before in truth and sincerity he seeketh for a remedy.

Now if you would dive into the depth of this deplorable estate, which every man, woman, and child is still in, unless born again: search the Scriptures thorowly, and see what God speaketh by his Spirit,

1. Of the sinfulness of man by nature.

2. Consider what the Scripture speaketh of a sinner out of Christ. And the answer to these two things will furnish any man with testimonies enough to shew him his ignorance, (his understanding being darkened) and his error, how he and all are gone out of the way, and through

through ſtrange deluſions have believed lyes. He ſhall ſee his fleſhly affections, and confuſed apprehenſions; and ſo be ready to ſay in his heart with *Paul*, *O miſerable man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death!* And ſo death came upon all men, becauſe all ſinned in *Adam*, *Rom.*14.18. & *Rom* 5.12. And ſo judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, *Rom.*5.18. And ſo by that one mans offence all are made ſinners, *Rom.*5.19. And then after this, all men were ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did their mothers conceive them, *Pſal.* 51.5. & *Eph.*2.3.

And as if all this were too little to compleat our condemnation, we go aſtray as ſoon as ever we are born, *Pſal.* 58.3, and ſo all the purpoſes and deſires of mans heart are only evil every day, *Gen.*6.5. So that in us dwelleth no good thing, *Rom.*7.18. and, *There is none that doth good, no not one*, Rom.3.12. *There is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good,*

and

and sinneth not, Eccles. 7. 20. And so, *all the world are become guilty before God*, Rom. 3. 19. *Being without Christ, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, and from the covenant of promise, without hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. 2. 12.

I might instance in many more Scriptures, to prove the truth of this miserable, deplorable, helpless, hopeless condition that Man is fallen into in the first *Adam*, if he live and die without an interest in the second *Adam*. But I shall refer you to the two forenamed heads:

1. Consider the sinfulness of man by nature. And,

2. The misery of a sinner out of Christ.

And when thou hast examined both these, thou wilt have a Cloud of witnesses: so that unless thou hast renounced thy Reason, and made Nonsense the ground of thy Religion, thou wilt be easily convinced of thy condition.

Now

Now I do verily believe that there are not above one quarter part of the men and women under the whole heavens that have trod this first step towards heaven, to see and know experimentally the sad deplorable condition that they be in, so as to lay it to heart: And of this quarter part that doth see by experience the sad state they be in, there is hardly one quarter part of them that doth take a course to come forth of that estate.

1. Some do see the miserable condition they be fallen into: and either with *Cain* say, Their misery is greater then they can bear; or else with *Judas* say, They have sinned in betraying innocent blood; and so despair of mercy, saying, Wo is me, I am undone! I am as wicked and ungodly a wretch as ever lived: I know this, and am not broken with the sense thereof; I cannot weep or shed one tear for my sins: I go to prayer, and to hear Sermons, and there is no more work-

working nor relenting upon my ſoul, then if I were a ſtock or a ſtone: I think I have ſinned the unpardonable ſin.

2. There be others of this quarter part, that do ſeek to recover themſelves by the Law: not conſidering, that by *the works of the Law no fleſh ſhall be juſtified*, Rom. 3. 20. And again, the Scripture ſaith, *Whoſoever keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all*, Jam. 2. 10. Now the Law cannot recover thee out of this ſtate, for theſe reaſons. Firſt, Becauſe the Law cannot give life, *Gal.* 3. 21. And ſecondly, Becauſe it would fruſtrate the death of Chriſt, *Gal.* 2. *ult.* Thirdly, Becauſe this righteouſneſs is imperfect, *Gal.* 3. 10. Fourthly, Becauſe the Lord hath put the righteouſneſs of the Law out of office (as to juſtifie any) and hath put the righteouſneſs of Chriſt in that place. Fifthly, Becauſe this doth keep poor ſouls in bondage, to be under the rigor of the Law.

3. There

3. There be a third ſort of this quarter part, that do ſeek to recover themſelves partly by Chriſt, and partly by *Moſes*. And ſo *Rom.* 9. 32. *Wherefore? becauſe they ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law, they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone.* Theſe people will ſeem to reſt upon Chriſt in word & in tongue; but in deed and truth they do reſt partly upon what they do, and partly upon what Chriſt hath done. And that will appear by theſe things:

1. They will highly eſteem their natural ingenuity.

2. They will reſt upon the external performances of duties.

3. They are much ſatisfied, and think the better of themſelvs when they have the approbation of others: never conſidering that Text, *Not he that commends himſelf, but whom the Lord commendeth.*

4. They reſt much upon their qualifications, (as the proud Phariſee, *I thank thee*, &c. *I am not as other men*, &c.)

5. There

5. There be a few, hardly (it may be ghessed) one in four, of those that do see their lost, fallen, and undone condition on the one hand; and that see the new and living way of coming out of this doleful state, on the other hand: And these do see,

1. That Christ is the true way; *Joh.* 14.6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life.*

2. They see him to be the only way, *Act.* 4.12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* 1 *Tim.* 2.5. For as there is but one God, so there is but *one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* There is no coming to the Father but by him; there is no acceptance with the Father, but through him; no acceptance with the Father in all our approaches and addresses to him, but what is done in the name of Christ. Hence it is that the Spouse saith, *He is the chiefest of ten thousand.* Hence it is that Christ is

so precious to them that be vile: thence it is that the Saints of old made him their portion: thence it is that *Paul* desired to know nothing among the Saints but Christ and him crucified: thence it is that he is called the Foundation, the Rock, the chief Corner stone: thence it is, that he is called our righteousness, our peace, our hope, our life, our King, our Priest, our Prophet, the delight of our souls, the joy of our hearts. The soul seeing these excellencies in Christ, giveth up it self to God in an everlasting Covenant: and as it taketh Christ the Head of the Covenant to be his, so it giveth up it self to Christ. In the work of Conversion, there is the resignation of the soul wholly to God in an everlasting Covenant to be his: and when once a soul cometh to do this, it will not only with our dear brother *Paul* deny natural self, and sinful self, but it will deny religious self too; and desire only and alone to appear before the Father

in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. *Paul* giveth an accompt what he was, *Act.*22.3. *I am* (saith he) *a Jew, to whom the promises were made*, &c. 2 *Cor.* 11.22. *Are they Hebrews? so am I: Are they Israelites? so am I: Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.* Phil.3.5. *Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews*, &c.

2. He giveth an accompt of his education, *Act.*22.3. *Brought up in this City at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the manner of the Law.*

3. He giveth an accompt how teachable and ingenious he was, *Gal.* 1.14. *And profited in the Jewish religion more then many of my equals of my own nation; and being more exceeding Zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*

4. He giveth an accompt of his zeal in that state, *Act.*22.3. *And was zealous towards God, as you all know, and as you your selves are at this day.* Phil.3.6. *Concern-*

ing Zeal, perſecuting the Church, &c.

5. He giveth an accompt of his entire obedience to whatſoever was written in the Law, *Phil.* 3. 6. *As touching the righteouſneſs which is in the Law, blameleſs.*

6. He giveth an accompt after all this of the high place God had called him unto, 2 *Cor.* 11. 5. *I ſuppoſe I am not behind the chiefeſt Apoſtle.* v. 23. *Are they Miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) I am more.* 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. *For in nothing am I behind the chiefeſt Apoſtle, though I be nothing.*

7. He giveth an accompt of his ſufferings for Chriſt, wherein he did exceed, 2 *Cor.* 11. from *v.* 23. to 27. *In ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft: Of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwrack; a night and a day have I been in the deep, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own Countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the*

the city, in perils in the wilderneſs, in perils in the ſea, in perils among falſe brethren, in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs, &c. Yet for all this *Paul* deſireth not to appear before God in any thing that he was, or had done, or could do, but onely and alone in the righteouſneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 3. 8, 9. He ſaw ſome imperfections in all his natural and ſpiritual priviledges and ſufferings, and ſo layeth down all at the feet of Chriſt, and deſireth to own only Chriſt, and him crucified, who is the true way, and the only way: and whoſoever doth ſeek ſalvation any other way, or elſe endeavoureth to joyn ſome good thing of his own to this way, mark that man, and that woman: theſe be thoſe that do climb over the door, and ſo in Chriſts accompt, are *thieves and robbers*, *Joh.* 10. 1, 2, 10. *I am the door* (ſaith Chriſt) *by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved,*

and shall go in and out, and finde pasture, Joh. 10, 7, 8, 9, &c.

As men come by the door into the house, so come we to Heaven through Christ only: for he only is our Wisdom, our Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, our Peace, our Portion, our All in All; *he is the chiefest among ten thousands*; yea, he is precious to those that believe; no other name, no other way, no other means to get audience, or acceptance with the heavenly Father but by him, for with him he is well pleased; in him all the Promises are Yea, and *Amen.*

Now then put all that hath been written concerning this first point together, namely, *The way to convert a Sinner*; and this is the sum of all hitherto.

1. That there is a necessity for a sinner to see that he is in a lost condition, undone without Christ; and the way to work this throughly, fully and effectually, is by the preaching of the Gospel, which

which conviniceth the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement, *Joh.* 16. 7, 8, 9, 10.

And again, it is the preaching of this Gospel, the Doctrine of Grace, that doth teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. And those blessed promises prevail with men to endeavor to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1.

2. There is no way to get out of this state of sin, but only by that new and living way the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and no way to get into, or to have any interest in him, but by forsaking all for him, and submitting to him, and receiving of him as our King to rule over us, as our Prophet to teach us, and our Priest to offer an acceptable sacrifice of prayer and intercession for us to his Father.

All men do seem to desire him, many in pretence do seek him, but there are

but few do finde him, because they know not where he is, nor the way to him, *Luk.*24 5.6. *Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, he is risen, as he told you, when he was in Galilee.* Now when a sinner is convinced of sin, so as to see himself an enemy to God, a childe of the Devil, under the Law, curse, wrath, and eternal destruction, and so beginneth to break forth, *Men, and brethren, what shall I do to be saved? Lord what wilt thou have me to do? O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* &c. And so in the next place, cometh to see that Christ is the true way, the new and living way, and the only way, the soul longeth to be acquainted with this Lord *Iesus Christ*, and in order thereto beginneth to enquire after him of his Saints; and in the book of his revealed will the Bible, he endeavors to search the Scriptures, *because they testifie of Christ*, *Ioh.*5.39 &c. And now the poor soul

soul beginneth to meet with many discouragements, and is brought through many difficulties before it cometh to a full assurance of interest in Christ; and here I cannot but give the Reader an account of mine own experience in these things, and how the Lord resolved my doubts, and opened the iron gates that were in my way to himself: First then, I having seen my self in a lost condition without Christ, and then secondly seen him to be the only way: then thirdly, I began to search what promises he had made in his word to a sinfull creature as I was; and I found many; I will name a few, *Heb.* 8.12. *For I will be mercifull to their unrighteousnes, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*: Isa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy sins for my own sake, and will remember them no more*: So 1 *Joh.* 1.9. so in 1 *Joh.* 2.1,2. & *Rom.* 5.20. & 1 *Pet.* 2.24.

1. When I had began to lay hold on these promises, then presently *Satan*, or else my own deceitfull heart, or both, whisper-

whiſpered in me, and told me thoſe Promiſes were made by men: It is true, thoſe Promiſes were written by Prophets and Apoſtles, and ſo godly men; But we finde that godly men have been miſtaken; and if ſo, why not they? Again, they gave but their judgement according to their light, and ſo ſpake many things very doubtfully: *I think that I have the Spirit of the Lord*, ſaith *Paul*, 1 Cor. 7. 40. *This I ſay, not the Lord.* Again, *I give my judgement, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 7. 25. And will thou adventure thy ſoul upon God under ſuch doubtfull expreſſions as theſe? Now when I had gotten over this aſſault or great diſcouragement by ſuch means as I ſhall hold forth by and by, then next,

Object. 2. *Satan, or mine own heart, or both, endeavoured to perſwade me that the Scripture is corrupted in part, or in whole, by reaſon of a ſpirit of ignorance, or of ſelf-ends in the Tranſlators, whereby I thought the Scriptures are much corrupted, both for matter and method.* *Anſ.*

Anſ. 1. Firſt then, for anſwer unto theſe two great diſcouragements, (whereby my own ſoul was ſatisfied, which was ſtaggering many years before) I could nor but grant that there are ſome Texts of Scripture diſordered in the tranſlation (as ſometimes the cart before the horſe) the effect before the cauſe, and ſuch like: And this I came to know both by the Cloud of witneſſes without me, I mean many precious Saints well acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek copies; and by the witneſs within me, or candle that God hath lighted in my ſoul. But foraſmuch as there are not many ſuch faults, and foraſmuch as the generality of Scriptures are truly, clearly, faithfully and juſtly tranſlated according to the mind of the Spirit; and my faith and hope being in God, not in one ſingle text or word, but according to the univerſal general harmony of the ſpiritual ſenſe of the Scriptures, I deſire to believe it is the revealed will of God,

and

and the true declaration of his mind to me, and to all that believe that report God hath given of his Son: wherefore I would ſet to my ſeal that God and his Word are true and faithful, high and ſpiritual, quick and powerful, ſharper then any two-edged ſword, dividing between the marrow and the joynts; it diſcerneth thoughts and ſearcheth hearts: In a word, it hath done that upon me and others, that the word of no mortal man can do. So that whoſoever readeth and underſtandeth, affecteth, believeth, applieth, and practiſeth what is there held forth, it is able to make him wiſe, throughly furniſhed unto every good work.

2. Conſider, that whatſoever is promiſed either in the Old or New Teſtament, ſhall undoubtedly be made good: for the Prophets and Apoſtles were but the mouth of God to the people, as doth appear in and by theſe Scriptures; as, *Act.* 3. 21. *Which God hath ſpoken*

ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets ſince the world began. Heb.1.1. *God who at ſundry times and in ſundry manners ſpake by the Prophets to our Fathers, hath in theſe laſt dayes ſpoken to us by his Son.* So again the Apoſtles were but the mouth of Chriſt. *Luk.*10.16. *They that hear you, hear me,* ſaid Chriſt to them. Yea, they did ſpeak by the Spirit of Chriſt. *Act.*2. 4. *They ſpake as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Mat.10.20. *For it is not you that ſpeak, but the Spirit of my Father which ſpeaketh in you.* So the Prophets of old, when they propheſied to the people, you ſhall find them ſaying, *Thus ſaith the Lord, thus ſaith the Lord,* &c.

3. Conſider, if the ſayings and ſpeakings of the Apoſtles and Prophets be the ſayings and ſpeakings of the Almighty, ſo that they were but the mouth of God to the people: then ſurely all theſe promiſes and threatnings are like himſelf faithful and true, ſo that every tittle of them ſhalbe fulfilled in its time.

time. *Mat.*5.18. *One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till all be fulfilled,* (in its time.) *Luk.* 16.17. *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, then for one tittle of the word to fail* Tit. 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promised before the world began,* &c. *wherefore let us hold the profession of our faith without wavering.* Why so? *Ans* Heb. 10 23. *For he is faithfull that hath promised.*

Obj. That the Prophets and Apostles were the mouh of God, and that this God is faithful, so that every thing promised hath been or shall be made good, this is undeniable and without dispute: but what is that to me, (saith the poor soul) if God had spoken particularly to me by his Prophets or Apostles, as he did to the Jews and Gentiles then in being, it were something: but alas! these promises were made to the people then in being; and what is that to me, that had my being many hundreds, if not some

some thousands of years since them?

Ans. I must confess that this was a great objection upon my soul for many years, until I came to believe that these Promises were made unto us as well as unto them, and written for our learning as well as for theirs, which at last I was convinced of by these and the like Scriptures, *viz.* Joh.17.20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe in me through their word.* Rom. 15.4. *For whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* 1 Cor.9,10. *Saith he it altogether for their sakes? for our sakes no dobut this is written.* Rom 4. 23,24. *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him for righteousness; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead.* 1 Cor.10,11. *Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and are written for*

our

our learning upon whom the end of the world is come. Again, we read, that *Chriſt ever liveth to make interceſsion for us: and will ſave to the uttermoſt, them that come to God by him.* *Peter* tells us from the Lord, 2 *Pet.*1.20. That we muſt not make the Scriptures ſpeak in a private ſenſe; that is, we muſt not Analyſe, or interpret them ſo, as if the Propheſies thereof did relate only to the particular times, places, and perſons, in, by, and to whom they were at firſt uttered, &c.

Now then if the Scriptures be the word of God, as hath been proved, and that they are not ſo much corrupted by the Tranſlators, but in the main and general bulk and parts are pure and clear, the Prophets and Apoſtles being the mouth of God to us: and that this God is faithfull and cannot lye, nor ſuffer one tittle of his word to fail; and that theſe Promiſes for the moſt part belong unto us, as well as to the Saints then in being,

to whom they were spoken; then to proceed in the next place, let us consider what promises are made, and of what nature they are; and if we search diligently we shall finde in the Old and New-Testament, whole clouds, or Catalogues of Promises, sutable to every condition, that a man or woman is subject to be in, from the state of nature to the state of grace and glory; but I must confine my self to the point in hand, *viz.* to the Promises made to the old man, to one yet in darkness, who sees himself to be sick and unrighteous, crying out, *What shall I do to be saved?*

1. First, the Lord cometh by his Word, or Servants, or both, and inviteth this soul to come to himself, as in *Mat.*11.28. *Come unto me you that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*: O, but saith the poor soul, I am not weary and heavy-laden with my sins: then the Lord doth stoop (as it were) a little lower, *Job* 33.27, 28. *He looketh up-*

on a man, and if any say, I have sinned, He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

O but saith the staggering soul, I cannot confess my sin, nor say that I have no profit in it.

Then the Lord stoopeth further to the poor soul, *Isa.* 43. 25, 26. *I even I am he that blotteth out thy sins for my own Names sake: put me in remembrance of this; let us plead together.* Jer. 3. 13. *Only acknowledge thy sin, and I will pardon it.* First, the Lord cometh and inviteth the soul to come unto him, but the soul will not come: then secondly, he biddeth him again, or commandeth to enforce his invitation, as in *Acts* 17. 30. But for all this he doth sit still: then the Lord cometh with his soft melting promises, *Mat.* 11. 30. I will give you rest, you shall finde rest for your souls, I will not cast you off: I will love you freely: and forgive you fully, and clearly: and shew mercy to you cheerfully, and remove

move your sins out of my sight perpetually, and receive you into my love and presence eternally. *Isa.*55.1,2. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters; and he that hath no money, come and buy milk and wine without money and without price.* And if thou return to the Lord, he will abundantly pardon thy sins, *v.*7. & Rev.22.17. *And the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth or thirsteth come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Heb.8.12. *For I will be mercifull to their unrighteousnes, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* 1 Joh.1.9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithfull and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnes. Christ dyed for the ungodly,* Rom.5.6.8. and *he doth justifie the ungodly,* Rom.4.5. *But where sin did abound, grace did much more abound,* Rom.5.20. Isa.43.24,25,26. *Thou hast done* (saith the Lord) *nothing for me, but made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me*

with thine iniquities: yet I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſsions for my own name ſake, and will not remember thy ſins. Put me in remembrance of this, let us plead together; declare thou, that thou mayſt be juſtified. Mar. 5. *v.* 25. to 34. *There was a woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years: when ſhe heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind him; for ſhe ſaid within her ſelf, If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I ſhall be whole.* Now conſider theſe things.

1. This woman had no invitation to come to Chriſt, as we have.

2. She had no promiſe of being healed by touching his garment.

3 She had no example of any that ever was healed in that way: And yet notwithſtanding all this, ſhe ſaid, *If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I ſhall be whole.* She did ſo, and was made whole. But we (poor ſinners) have many invitations to come, and many promiſes that he will not caſt us off, but

heal

heal us, if we come; and beſides all this, we have many examples of thouſands left upon record in Scripture, (and written for our learning) that came and were healed. So that the Lord of glory doth leave all men without excuſe: for he reſolveth all our doubts, anſwereth all our objections, taketh away all the ſtumbling-blocks that ſeem to lie in our way to heaven. So that he is not wanting to us, if we are not wanting to our ſelves: And if we live in miſery, he is not wanting to us; for we are not ſtraitned in him, but in our own bowels: for he never ſaid to us, *Seek ye me in vain.* His wayes are equal, though our wayes are unequal. He knocks at the door of our hearts, and waiteth to be gracious unto us; aſſuring us by his word, covenant, and oath, that he delighteth not in the death of a ſinner, but would have him repent and live, *Ezek.* 33.11. Again, he profeſſeth that he came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them,

*Luk.*9.56. 1 *Tim.*2.5,6. Yea, though thy ſins be many in number, and moſt vile for nature, yet I will pardon thee for them, and cleanſe thee of them, *Iſa.* 1.18. & 1 *Joh.*1.7. Yea, I will not only pardon thee, and purge thee, but blot them out of the book of my remembrance for ever, *Iſa.*43.25. & *Heb.* 10.17. and freely love thee, accept of thee, and embrace thee, as if thou hadſt never ſinned againſt me: for I look upon thee as thou art in my Son, and ſo I ſee no iniquity in thee, nor will I ever impute any unto thee, 2 *Cor.*5.19.

So I have (ſaith the Lord Jeſus Chriſt) taken all things out of the way that hindered thee to be ſaved, *Col.*2.14. and have bought thee from earth, and have purchaſed thee life and ſalvation, as thou mayſt clearly ſee, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2. & 1 *Pet.*1.18,19.

Obj. But ſome poor ſoul might object and ſay, It is true, here be precious promiſes for thoſe to lay hold on to whom they

they do belong: but for my part, I am not elected, and therefore they belong not to me; I am not chosen by God from the foundation of the world, as some others are.

Ans. Who told thee so, that thou wast not elected, &c.? Is not the Gospel to be preached to every creature? And doth not the Scripture tell thee,

1. That God is no respecter of persons: In Creation he did not make one man of a more pure metal then another, but he made all men of one blood, *Act.*17.26.

2. He is no respecter of persons in Redemption, being warily understood: for *He gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2.6. *And tasted death for every man*, Heb. 2.9. *See* Joh.3.16,&c.

3. He is no respecter of persons in Vocation. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, come, come, come*, Isa.55.1,2,3. & Rev.22.17. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come: and let him that is a thirst, come;*

and whoſoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely, &c. For I am no reſpecter of perſons or nations: for in every nation, whether *Jew*, *Greek*, *Barbarian*, *Scythian*, bond or free, *He that believeth and obeyeth, ſhall be juſtified and ſaved*, Mat.10.32,33. *See* 2 Sam.14.14.

4. The Lord doth ſtrictly command us, that we ſhould not reſpect perſons, *Deut.*1.17. telling us it is not good, *Pro.* 24.23. and he will reject us if we do, *Job* 13.10. becauſe it is ſinful, and contrary to his will, *Jam.*2.9.

For Election and Reprobation are known only by Him that was able to open the Book that was ſealed. Its true, a man may come to ſee himſelf elected, having in obedience to the command of God *given all diligence to make his calling and election ſure:* but as for others, they cannot judge but at random; for they cannot ſee their *white-ſtone* or *new-name*; for none can read it but they that have it. Wherefore he that preacheth the Goſpel,

Goſpel, is to declare to the people, that the Lord *would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth:* and to acquaint them, that Chriſt gave himſelf *a ranſom for all*; and now he doth invite all; and doth proteſt that he would not the death of a ſinner, but that he ſhould rather repent and live. So the Lord calleth upon all men and women,

1. What perſon ſoever he be.

2. What ſinne ſoever he hath committed.

3. What time ſoever he doth come, he ſhall not be caſt off.

Firſt, what perſon ſoever he be, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, old or young, high or low, rich or poor: as *Act.*10.34,35.

Secondly, what ſinne ſoever it be, the leaſt or the greateſt, of omiſſion or commiſſion, original or actual, open or ſecret, againſt much mercy, or againſt leſs mercy. Though *Peter* ſaid to Chriſt *Luk.*5.8. *Depart from me, for I am a ſinfull*

full man: yet *David* ſaid, *Pſal.* 25. 11. *Pardon my ſin, for it is wondrous great.* Yea, ſaith the Lord, *Though thy ſins be as skarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow*; and if they be many in number, I will *blot them out as a thick cloud.* Yea, *though thy ſins be as the ſands of the ſea, more in number then the hairs of thy head, yet I will abundantly pardon thee*, Iſa. 55. 7. & 1 Joh. 1. 9.

Thirdly, what time ſoever a ſinner doth come to the Lord, he ſhall not be caſt off. Joh. 6. 37. *I will in no wiſe caſt off*, &c. Ezek. 33. 14, 15. *At what time ſoever a ſinner doth repent, &c. I will blot them out, &c.* & Ezek. 18. 21, 22. Luk. 23. 43. *To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* Rev. 3. 20. *The Lord ſtandeth at the door and knocketh*: yea, ſaith the Prophet Iſaiah, *The Lord waiteth to be gracious, &c.* He hath ſtood at the door knocking and waiting upon ſome of us twenty years, thirty, forty, fifty, or ſixty; and beſeeching thee yet, O thou ſinful ſoul,

to

to give up thy self to him in an everlasting covenant. As thou takest Christ the head of the covenant to be thine, so thou giveſt up thy self to Christ: in the work of converſion, there is a reſignation of the ſoul wholly to God in an everlasting covenant to be his. When thou goeſt about this work, the Devil will be perſwading thee, that it will be too ſoon to turn to God: or if he cannot hold thee there, then he will tell thee thy ſin is too great, and ſo no hope to obtain mercy. Wherefore if ever thou wilt lay hold on eternal life, do it preſently while it is called to day, leſt thou be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin. Believe not Satan, neither conſult with fleſh and blood, leſt in the mean time repentance be hid from thine eyes, as it was from *Jeruſalems*, and thou find no place for repentance, although thou ſeek it with tears, as *Eſau*, Heb. 12. 17.

1. And ſo much I thought good to write

write of this first point, wherein the love of God doth so wonderfully appear to poor sinners, in making so many promises to them, and inviting of them, and waiting on them, and taking all stumbling blocks out of their way: And yet for all this, not one in twenty that wil so much as hearken to him, or come to him, or believe in him: then the Devil and his instruments come, and begin to take us away to prison.

2. Then the Lord Jesus Christ stepeth in, and baileth thee and me, and so becometh our Surety; not an uncertainty, but a surety, a tye that cannot be broken. When God dealeth with men in Christ, he dealeth with them in a sure way. Now a Surety is a better assurance then a Promise: for there be many men that will make large promises to lend thee so much money to pay thy debt, or if thou shouldst be arrested, that they will bail thee; but when it cometh to the pinch, they fly off, and will not make

good

good what they promiſed. But Chriſt will not be worſe then his word; he will be thy Surety, and more then a Surety; he will be firſt in the Bond, and pay all the debt, and never require one penny of thee afterwards, but only to be thankful: And that thou mayſt be free indeed, and never queſtioned for the debt more, he taketh thy ſin, thy debt, the Law and the Curſe; and payeth the debt, ſatisfieth the Law, and cancelleth the Bond, *Col.* 2.14. Well, but moſt of us ſinners will neither believe him in his promiſes, nor take him as our Surety, nor give credit to what he ſaith in his Word in any of theſe things:

3. Then the Lord ſtoopeth a little lower, and cometh a little neerer, and entreth into covenant to us under hand and ſeal. Now a Covenant giveth ſtrength to the truth of any engagement. When we have but a promiſe, we uſe to ſay, we have nothing but a bare promiſe for ſuch and ſuch things; but

but when the party hath indented in a Covenant under hand and ſeal, you look upon that as firm as you deſire. Even ſo doth the Lord enter into Covenant to confirm and eſtabliſh all his promiſes, that all ſtaggerings and doubtings in us might vaniſh; He hath wrapped up all his Promiſes in a perpetual Covenant, that we may be able to reſiſt Satan, and ſay unto him, God is engaged under hand and ſeal to make good the word wherein he hath cauſed me to put my truſt; and my God is a God keeping Covenant, who hath made many promiſes and engagements, all ſealed and made ſure to me by an unchangeable Covenant. See 2 *Sam.* 7. 14, 15. & *Pſal.* 89. *v.* 28. to 37. compared with *Heb.* 8. 9, 10. Well, but we will neither believe him in his Promiſes, nor Suretiſhip, nor yet in his Covenant: all this doth not draw us yet to him perhaps.

4. Then the Almighty being grieved with the hardneſs of our hearts, cometh in

in the fourth place, and ſweareth to us, that he meaneth no other then what he ſpeaketh. *Ezek.*33.11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil wayes; for why will ye die O houſe of Iſrael?* See 2 *Pet.*3.9. Again, *Heb.*6.17,18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath.* v.18. *That by two immutable things in which it is impoſsible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us*, &c. When a man, that hath but the reputation of an honeſt man, his oath is believed, when his words were not. Hence the Apoſtle telleth us, *Heb.* 6.16. *that an Oath for confirmation is to men an end of all ſtrife:* Though the truth before was doubtful, yet when once confirmed by an oath, there is no more conteſt amongſt men. And ſo the mer-

merciful Father, that nothing may be wanting to win our belief to the promiſes made by himſelf, he hath ſworn to the truth, *Heb.*6.13. When God made promiſe to *Abraham*, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf: he confirmeth his promiſe by an oath. So when Chriſt came, in whom all the promiſes are *yea* and *amen*, to make ſure work of the truth of them, he is confirmed in his adminiſtration by an oath, *Heb.*7.21. *He was made a Prieſt by an oath, by him that ſaid, The Lord ſware and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever,* &c. Now what was the cauſe of this great condeſcenſion of the Creator to his creatures, who are ſo untoward, the Apoſtle ſatisfieth us as to the end aimed at, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. *That we might not doubt, but have ſtrong conſolation and full aſſurance of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, hath promiſed before the world began,* Tit. 1.2.

5. The Lord cometh and ſealeth his pro-

Promise, his Covenant, and his Oath, with the blood of his Son. If a man promise to free thee from such a debt that thou art not able to pay, thou hast a little hopes: but if he giveth thee a Bond, and enter into a Covenant, and at last swear that he will make all good, who is it but would believe such a man, (being very able to perform it?) But if he should seal his Promise, seal his Covenant, seal his Oath with his blood, that there is neither friend nor foe that shall change his mind; who is there amongst us but would believe that this man meaneth as he speaketh, and will undoubtedly perform what he saith? But here is much more ground for confidence then all that: For some of the best Saints have told a lye, and proved false, (though they have repented afterwards;) but behold, he that hath promised us, and entred into covenant, and sworn and sealed all with his blood, *Rom.*5.6. & *Heb.*9.23. & *Rev.*1.5. is a

faithful true God that cannot lye or fail of one tittle of what he hath promiſed: as witneſs all the Saints left upon record both in the Old and New Teſtament; and many Saints now living can ſpeak and teſtifie that he is a God of truth; who hath opened a new and living way through his blood into the *holy of holies*, and no men or devils can ſhut it. *Iſa.60. 11. Therefore thy gates ſhall be open continually, they ſhall not be ſhut day nor night. Ho, every one that will come, come, come: I will in no wiſe, in no wiſe, in no wiſe caſt you off*, Iſa.55. 1, 2, 3. compared with *Joh.6.37.*

The ſtability of a Promiſe, Covenant, Oath, and Seal, ſtandeth much upon the qualifications of the Promiſer. If a man make me a promiſe to do ſuch and ſuch things for me, and yet I queſtion whether ever he make it good, it muſt be from a doubt of the want of one of theſe things in him that maketh the promiſe, (as Mr. *Owen* in his late Sermon

Sermon before the Parliament, very well observeth:) Our staggering or doubting must arise,

1. Either from the truth of him that maketh the promise:

2. Or from his ability to make good his word:

3. Or of his sincerity to intend me really what he speaketh:

4. Or his constant memory to take the opportunity of doing the thing intended:

5. Or of his stableness to be still of the same mind.

Now if there be no want of any of these in him whose promises we speak of, there is then certainly no ground of doubting, or staggering, or mistrusting, but rather a firm ground of confidence, assurance, and strong consolation; seeing we know him in whom we have believed, and know him to be able to do that which we expect from him, and know him to be faithfull keeping promise, and know him to be willing to shew mercy with cheerfulness.

1. That there is truth in the promiſes, will appear from the Author of them, who is Truth it ſelf, and cannot lye, *Tit.*1.2. Nay, he can aſſoon ceaſe to be God, as to forget, neglect, or make void any one tittle of all that he promiſed by the Prophets & Apoſtles, which were his mouth to his people: ſo that his word is ſaid not only to be true, but truth it ſelf, *Joh.*17.17,19.

2. But ſecondly, though there be truth in the promiſe, yet there may want ability in the Promiſer to do perfectly the thing promiſed: But here is the Fountain of all ability under and above the Sun, in this Promiſer. When God came to *Abraham* to engage himſelf in that Covenant of Grace from whence all the Promiſes do flow, whereof we read: the Lord layeth this down as the bottom of all, *Gen.*17.1. *I am* (ſaith he) *God almighty*, or *God all-ſufficient*, &c. And from thence the Apoſtle telleth us, *Rom.*4.21. *Abraham believed*

lieved God, and being fully perſwaded, that he who had promiſed was able alſo to perform. Eph.3.20. *He is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think:* So again in the *Hebrews* we read, *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come to God by him.* Again, *Paul* telleth the Elders of *Epheſus*, Acts 20.32. *The word of his grace is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.*

3. There may be want of ſincerity in promiſes made among men, which while we do but ſuſpect we cannot chooſe but doubt: but God and all his Promiſes are full of ſincerity; ſo that none need fear to truſt on them: he is the Lord, and he changeth not, but is the ſame (as he was yeſterday) to day, and will be for ever. Therefore (as the Scripture ſaith) *He will not alter the word that is gone out of his mouth: Heaven and earth may paſs away, but one jot or tittle of my word ſhall not fail till all be fulfilled.*

So that Faith in the Promiſes, and hope of the accompliſhment of the Promiſes go hand in hand, and are inſeparable, ſo that the believer of them ſhall (after a little patient waiting) be the enjoyer of them; and in the promiſes the righteouſneſs of God is revealed from Faith to Faith, *Rom.* 1.17. From the righteouſneſs of God revealing, to the Faith of man receiving.

4. Although there be truth in the Promiſe, and ability and ſincerity in the Promiſer; yet if he that maketh the Promiſe ſhould forget, there were a ground of doubting: for inſtance, *Pharaoh* his Butler made large promiſes to *Joſeph* (and probably ſpake the truth according to his intention then) but thoſe did not profit *Joſeph*, becauſe (as the Text ſaith) *The Butler did not remember Joſeph*, *Gen.*39.23. But this hath not the leaſt colour in Divine Promiſes: It was *Sions* infirmity to ſay, *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me,*

me, Iſa.49.14. For ſaith the Lord, *Can a woman forget her ſucking childe? &c. Yea, ſhe may forget, yet will I not forget thee: for I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands,* Iſa.49.15,16.

Where all other things concur, yet if the perſon promiſing be ſubject to mutation, or changeable, a man may juſtly doubt: therefore the Lord carefully rejecteth all ſinfull ſurmiſes concerning the leaſt change or alteration in him or any of his promiſes; *He is the Father of lights with whom there is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning.* Jam. 1.18. Again, *Mal.3.6. I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.* The Lord knoweth that if any thing in us might prevail with him to alter the word that is gone out of his mouth, we ſhould as ſurely go to Hell as he is in Heaven, we are ſuch provoking Creatures; therefore he layeth our not being conſumed only on this, his own unchangeableneſs; for when he is

once engaged he will certainly go thorow; if his Promiſe be gone forth out of his mouth, and his oath is paſſed, and his word ingaged: he will ſurely accompliſh it.

It is true never did any wait upon God for the accompliſhment and fulfilling of a Promiſe, but he found many difficulties fall out between the Promiſe and the perfect performance of the thing promiſed: ſo was it with our Father *Abraham*, in a buſineſs of his Son; and ſo with *David*, in the caſe of a Kingdom: and ſo with *Joſeph* before he came to his Liberty and Honour.

Time would fail me to write of the large experiences of Saints left upon record, and now in being in this very thing, which was fain to hang upon a Promiſe, as an apple upon a Tree which was blown by many fierce winds, and had many ſticks and ſtones thrown at it to beat it down, and yet notwithſtanding it hung faſt.

I

I know in whom I have believed (saith one) *Remember thy word in which thou hast caused me to trust*, (saith another) *I will not let thee go unless thou bless me* (said a third) *Though thou kill me, I will trust in thee* (said a fourth) *I will give thee no rest day nor night untill thou bless me* (saith a fift.) *While I live I will wait upon thee* (saith a sixt) *Nothing shall be able to separate me from thee* (saith a seventh.)

What is there in the World that hath not at one time or other stood up to its uttermost in opposition against the word of promise wherein some or other of the Saints have put their trust? divers men in their mysterious temptations, subtle baits, accusations, and oppositions: many in their counsels, reasonings, contrivances, interests, dominations, combinations, armies, and the uttermost of endeavours have been exercised: in the whole frame of Nature in its Primitive instituted course, fire, water, earth, ayr, day, night, age, sickness, death, all in their

their courſes, have at leaſt ſeemingly fought, (and been abuſed by the Devil and his inſtruments) againſt the accompliſhment of Promiſes: And what have they obtained by all their contending? all of them, according to Gods promiſe and appointment, and providence, have been diſappointed, fruſtrated, turned back, and changed; ſerving only to make the truth of the mercy and promiſes more amiable and glorious.

Obj. If God be ſo willing to ſave ſinners, that he promiſeth to do it, entreth into covenant to make it good, and ſweareth he willeth not their deſtruction, and ſealeth all with the blood of his Son, as you have abundantly proved: and that he hath to accompliſh, compleat, and finiſh this great work,

1. Taken our nature upon him, *Heb.* 2. 16, 17. And as he took our nature, *we are made partakers of his divine nature*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

2. In that nature, and for us, and in our ſtead,

ſtead, yielded obedience to whatſoever the Law required of us. I muſt have obedience, ſaith the Law; Thou ſhalt, ſaith Chriſt: I muſt have perfect obedience, ſaith the Law; Thou ſhalt, ſaith Chriſt: I muſt have perpetual obedience, ſaith the Law; Thou ſhalt, ſaith Chriſt: I muſt be fully ſatisfied, ſaith the Law; Thou ſhalt, ſaith Chriſt, &c.

3. Taken our ſins upon himſelf, and was made ſin for us: All the ſins that have been from *Adam's* time, and that ſhall be committed by thoſe that ſhall be ſaved, untill the day of Judgment, were gathered together and laid upon Chriſt; and ſo he made an end of ſin; *Dan.* 9. 24. & *Joh.* 1. 29. & *Heb.* 2. 16. & 1 *Pet.* 2. 24.

4. Taken all the curſes upon himſelf that were due to us, *Gal.* 3. 13. *being made a curſe for us.* See *Iſa.* 53. 4, 5. to *v.* 11. 1 *Pet.* 2. 24.

5. And ſuffered death, which was the wages

wages of ſin for us. Death is called the *King of terrors*: and there had need come ſome great King to overcome this king; therefore Jeſus Chriſt came and effected this work, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. & *Iſa.* 25. 8.

6. And he hath fully ſatisfied Gods juſtice. Now juſtice muſt be ſatisfied fully, elſe there is no ſalvation to be expected. As ſoon as Chriſt had given ſatisfaction to his Fathers juſtice, *Pſal.* 85. 7. then *juſtice, mercy, righteouſneſs and peace kiſſed each other*, &c.

7. And he hath overcome the world for us: All the wicked powers of the world gathered together to hinder this work; but Chriſt overcame them all, *Joh.* 16. 33.

8. And he hath conquered and overcome the Devil for us. Chriſt had a ſingle duel; and the iſſue thereof was, that Satan bruiſed the heel of Chriſt, and Chriſt wounded his head, according to that ſaying *Gen.* 3. 15. & *Joh.* 13. 12.

Chriſt

Chriſt wounded him, and caſt him out.

9. If we think this is not enough, the Lord doth ask us a queſtion, *What could I have done more for my vineyard, then I have done?* Iſa. 5. 4. And again, *Are not my wayes equal, and yours unequal?* I ſay, if all this be true, what is the reaſon there be ſo few that do believe and imbrace the Goſpel, and lay hold of eternal life?

Anſ. Firſt, becauſe there is a generation of Trencher-Chaplains, I mean the High-Prieſts, ſuch as are ſpoken to by Chriſt; *Mat.* 23. 73. (ſaying) *Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men; for ye neither go in your ſelves, nor ſuffer them that would enter to go in.* See Joh. 7. 48, 49. & Joh. 9. 22.

A ſecond reaſon why ſo few do truly imbrace the Goſpel, is, becauſe thoſe that ſome have choſen to be our Teachers, teach *Moſes* his Law, more then Chriſt, as *1 Tim.* 1. 6, 7. *From which ſome having ſwerved*, &c.

Reaſ.

Reaſ. 3. wherefore ſo few imbrace and obey the Goſpel, is this: Becauſe the wayes of the Goſpel are accompted Hereſie, and they that imbrace the Goſpel Hereticks, as in *Act.* 24.5. & 14.

*R.*4. wherfore ſo few imbrace Goſpel promiſes, is, Becauſe the promiſes of the Goſpel are ſpiritual, and promiſes of another life; and theretore ſo few receive it. Now if the Goſpel promiſed to make men rich, and great men in the world, (as Mr. *Stakes* hath well obſerved) then all men would be Goſpel-profeſſours, to have the praiſe of men: but becauſe thoſe that imbrace the Goſpel loſe the favour and eſteem of the world, and are as the off-ſcouring of all things, the wayes of the Goſpel are deſpiſed and contemned in the eyes of the world, *Mat.*10.22. & *Ioh.*15.19.

*Reaſ.*5. is, Becauſe the Goſpel holdeth forth a ſelf-denying ſpirit; ſo that a man muſt deny himſelf in the honors, riches, and pleaſures of this world, *Luk.*14.26. *Mat.*8.34. *Luk.*9.23, &c. But

But moſt men inſtead of denying themſelves fall a denying of Chriſt; they will either ſell *Chriſt* with *Judas*; or forſake *Chriſt* with *Demas*; or at leaſt deny him with *Peter*; but not one of twenty weep bitterly for it, as he did.

Reaſ.6. is, Becauſe there are ſo few of the great Ones that do believe the Goſpel; and this was the plea of the Scribes and Phariſees againſt it, *Joh.7.* 48,49.

Reaſ.7. is, Becauſe, both Prieſts and People have a high eſteem of the perſons of ſome, and a diſ-eſteem of the perſons of others: the Scribes and Phariſees did vilifie the perſon of Chriſt, in their ſaying, *Is not this the Carpenter, the ſon of Mary*, &c. Theſe proud Scribes and Phariſees deſpiſed the Apoſtles, becauſe they came not into the Miniſtry by the door of humane inventions; their perſons were deſpiſed becauſe they were Tradeſmen; their Doctrine was deſpiſed becauſe they were illiterate and

and unlearned men in humane Schools; and both they and their followers were despised, because they were but few in number, but a little Flock, walking in a narrow way that leadeth unto life.

*Reas.*8. wherefore so few embrace the Gospel, is, because the Lord hath been pleased in all Ages to reveal his truth to many contemptible mean men in the worlds eye, as we may see both in the times of the Law, and the Gospel: The Lord called *Moses who was keeping the sheep of Jethro his father in Law*, as *Exod.*3.1,2.

Again, the Lord called *David* as he was attending of his Fathers Flocks: And the Lord called *Elisha* as he was ploughing; and *Amos* who was an Herdsman, as you may see, *Amos* 1.1.

Since in the time of the Gospel, he called *Matthew* the Publican; *Luke* that was a Physitian; *Paul* a Tent-maker, *John*, *Peter*, and *James*, that were Fishermen, &c.

There-

Therefore, *Behold* (ſaith the Lord) *I will proceed to do a marvellous work among the people, even a marvellous work, and a wonder* (*that they will not believe if I ſhould declare it unto them*) *the wiſdom of the wiſe ſhall periſh, and I will make the Diviners mad*; Iſa.29.14. & 1 *Cor.*1. 20, *&c.*

*Reaſ.*9. Wherefore ſo few embrace and obey the Goſpel, is, becauſe the ways of the Goſpel are perſecuted ways; for no ſooner did Chriſt begin to preach the Goſpel, but the High-Prieſts and Doctors ſought to deſtroy him. And ſo his Apoſtles (Chriſt told them) *Mat.*10.22. *And ye ſhall be hated of all men*, &c. Then *Peter* and *Iohn* were put in Priſon, *Acts* 4.3. for preaching the Goſpel; and were ſcourged and beaten, *Acts* 5.40. and commanded to preach no more in the *name of Ieſus*: then they killed *Steven*, ſtoning him with ſtones, *Acts* 7. then they killed *James* with the ſword, *Acts* 12. And they put

Peter in prison, &c. And *Paul* was persecuted on every side, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. 24, 25, &c.

Reas. 10. wherefore so few embrace the Gospel, is, because the Gospel holdeth forth separation, that Gods people are or ought to be a separated people in respect of worship from all the people of the earth; but separation which is Gods Command, and his Peoples duty, is a most hainous thing in the worlds eye, though it be a Gospel precept, as doth appear, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. compared with *Rev.* 18. 4. & *Joh.* 15. 18, 19. & *Acts* 2. 42.

Reas. 11. is, Because most people be perswaded they be righteous already, because they were Baptized, and have been partakers of the Lords Supper: so said the *Iews* to *Christ*, *we be Abrahams seed, and were never in bondage*, &c.

Reas. 12. Because when people come to hear, their minds be taken up with other

other things, *Ezek.* 33.30. *They come and sit as my people, but their hearts goeth after their* &c.

There be many other Reasons why so few embrace & believe the Gospel; I wil but name them: they do not rightly apply the word; they content themselves with bare Hearing; and live in some known sin, and yet are highly conceited. So having laid before thee whosoever thou art that readest these lines, that the Lord of Glory hath left upon Record to work Faith in thee; and the Reasons why there are so few that do believe: In the next place I shall in few lines present unto thy consideration, the injuries, mischiefs, and inconveniences that unbelief, and not embracing the Gospel, doth bring both to God and our selves.

Secondly, the benefits and priviledges that all those have that do believe and embrace the Gospel.

1. The first mischief that unbelief

doth to our ſelves is this; if thou doſt ſtore up Promiſes ſutable to every condition, and expect the fulfilling of them, they ſhall ſuſtain thee in the time of temptation, and fiery tryals that are coming upon thee, when thou wilt have occaſion to make uſe of them.

Unleſs thou haſt Faith then to apply and lay hold on them, thou wilt notwithſtanding be in as ſad condition, as one in miſery, that hath no hope of recovery, or no Promiſe at all to ſuſtain him: (this I did once know by wofull experience my ſelf) as many others alſo with whom I have had converſe; beſides the many clouds of Witneſſes in the Scriptures, which would be too tedious to put together here.

2. We grieve the Lord by our not giving credit to what he hath ſaid in his Word, *Mark* 3.5. *Jeſus was grieved* (ſaith the Text) Why? *for their unbelief and hardneſs of their hearts.* When *Chriſt* did ſeem to call in queſtion *Peters* love, by ſaying

ſaying three times, *Peter, loveſt thou me?* Joh. 21.15,16. (the Text ſaith) *Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid the third time, loveſt thou me?* Now *Chriſts* love to us doth a thouſand times exceed *Peters* love to *Chriſt*: how juſtly then may he be grieved, when we do not only three times call in queſtion his love to us: but more then three thouſand times: ſaying in effect, Lord *Ieſus*, loveſt thou me according to thy Word? doſt thou mean as thou haſt ſaid, or rather haſt not thou forgotten to be gracious? *&c.*

3, We provoke him, *Mat.* 17.17. *O faithleſs, and perverſe generation! how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you* (in this unbelieving frame?) *How can this be* (ſaith *Zacharias*) *Luk.* 1.18.20. *that I ſhall have a ſon? This ſhall be* (ſaith the Lord) *and thou thy ſelf for not believing, ſhalt be a ſign of it: thou ſhalt be dumb, and not ſpeak:* his doubting was a juſt provocation. When the Spies had ſeen the Land of *Canaan*, and

brought of the good fruit of it, then to queſtion the truth of it, and of Gods promiſes, whether the Lord would bring them in thither or no, this provoked the Lord, ſo that he ſware in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into his reſt.

4. By our continuing in a ſtate of unbelief, we diſhonour God. It is ſaid of *Abraham*, that he was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God. To be eſtabliſhed in believing, is to give to God the greateſt glory: every ſtaggering doth rob him of the glory of his truth: *He that believeth not hath made him a lyar*, 1 Joh. 5.10. Again, it robbeth him of the glory of his fidelity or faithfulneſs; *1 Joh. 1.9. If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* In a word, by infidelity we not only rob God of glory due to him, but our own ſouls alſo of mercy. It was a ſin for *David* to ſay, *All men are lyars*: But what a great ſin then is it for any of us to make the

God

God of truth a lyar, as every unbelieving ſoul doth? *If we believe not* (ſaith *Iſaiah*) *we ſhall not be eſtabliſhed:* Unbelief is no foundation of a quiet habitation.

5. A fifth miſchief that unbelief bringeth upon us, is this: It turneth our preaching into ſin, and our hearing, our reading, and beſt diſcourſes into ſin; in a word, it turneth all that ever we ſet our hand unto into ſin, *Rom.*14-23. We cannot pleaſe God in any thing we do without it, *Heb.*11.6. We cannot pray without it, as we ought, *Mar.* 11. 24. *Iam.*1.6. Laſtly (to adde no more) we cannot be ſaved without it, *Mar.*16.16. *Epheſ.*2.8.

I had thoughts to have inſiſted on the benefits that all thoſe ſhall have that do believe and imbrace the Goſpel: I will now but only name them. We ſhall profit by hearing the Word preached, when others ſhall not that are unbelievers, *Heb.*4.2. Again, he that believeth

ſhall overcome the world, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. He ſhall alſo overcome the Devil, 1 *Pet.* 5,8,9. & *Jam.*4.7. He ſhall alſo be enabled to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, *Eph.*6.16. He ſhall alſo have peace with God, *Rom.* 5. 1. And alſo he ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the truth, *Iſ.* 7. 9.

Now, O man, whoſoever thou art, that haſt read this little Book, and yet remaineſt, and reſolveſt to remain in the ſtate of unbelief, thou art left without excuſe; this word that thou haſt read ſhall riſe up in judgment againſt thee at the laſt day: Good had it been for thee that thou hadſt not heard of a Bible, and of the ſweet promiſes therein; for it leaveth thee without excuſe, and will riſe up in judgment againſt thee at the laſt day: For *thy dayes are ſwifter then a Weavers ſhuttle*; After a little inch of time ſpent here (in vanity) thy warm clay will become cold clay.

6. The next evil that unbelief bringeth

eth to the unbelieving party, is this; He cannot bear the mutability and change of his ſtate. For when the Lord Almighty turneth health into ſickneſs, credit into diſgrace, wealth into poverty, honour into diſhonour, wiſdom into fooliſhneſs, peace into trouble, liberty into bondage, friends into foes, enjoyments into wants, knowledge into ignorance, light into darkneſs: When theſe and the like tryals come to an unbelieving ſoul, he beginneth with *Judas* to hang himſelf, or with *Cain* to deſpair, or with *Achitophel* to deſtroy himſelf: or elſe if thy faith be but weak, thou wilt begin with the two Diſciples, *Luk.* 24. 13, to *v.* 25. to doubt, ſaying, *We truſted it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*; Or elſe with *Peter*, thou wilt ſink into the ſea of danger to be drowned, if Chriſt uphold thee not, as *Mat.* 14. 29, 30, 31. Or elſe thou wilt with *David* ſay, *I ſhall one day periſh by the hands of Saul:* Or elſe think that the Lord

Lord hath forgotten to be gracious. Whereas if we did believe ſtrongly, we ſhould ſay in the midſt of all the fiery trials with *Iob*, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord!* Job 1.21. Or elſe with the Prophet, *Pſal.* 3.6. *I will not be afraid of ten thouſand that have ſet themſelves againſt me round about:* And ſo thou wilt be enabled to go through the fire, and the water, as the Saints in *Heb.* 11. *Rejoycing to be accounted worthy to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt.* And ſo thou mayſt have a fellowſhip with him in all thy trials; ſaying with the Saints in 1 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9. *We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed.* In a word, faith maketh the ſoul ſtill and quiet in all Gods diſpenſations towards it, *Pſal.* 18. 2, &c.

And unbelief bringeth the contrary in every thing: There is no one thing that

that I know, ſo great a friend to the kingdom of Satan, and ſo great an enemy to the kingdom of God, as unbelief; neither can any ſin ſo certainly deſtroy the ſoul, as this infidelity: nay, all other ſins, without this, can never damn any ſoul: This ſin is Lord General, leading all other ſins: Unbelief is the ſupreme Agent, it commandeth all other evils; and therefore not any ſin is ſo dangerous as this. By faith God hath an intereſt in the ſoul; by unbelief the Devil hath an intereſt in the ſoul: At the laſt day, when Chriſt ſhal give the Devil his due, I mean his ſhare of men in the world, it will be only Unbelievers; for he hath intereſt in, or can lay claim to none elſe.

Now if we did conſider a little the benefits that do come to our ſouls by faith, and the miſchiefs that do attend unbelief, it would put us upon a diligent, conſtant, carefull improvement of our talents, in a frequent attendance upon God in the uſe of all meanes for the work-

working of this faith in us: which is wrought ſometimes by reading, ſometimes by conference, ſometimes in meditation, ſometimes by immediate inſpiration of the Spirit, but moſt frequently in the powerfull preaching of the Goſpel, as hath been lately proved. And then in order to this great work, 1. The ſinner is convinced of his ſin, by which he findeth himſelf to be in a loſt condition. 2. When the ſoul is even about to deſpair of mercy, ſick, and loſt, and laden, and undone; he hearkeneth and heareth, or readeth, and findeth that the Lord Chriſt came to heal the ſick, to find the loſt, and to pay the debt for, and to give a portion to the undone ſoul. 3. Then cometh the Spirit of the Lord, the ſame Spirit that did convince the ſoul of ſin, and ſhew the ſoul its loſt condition, and infuſeth the firſt act of faith into this ſoul. Now this faith, as it relateth to Chriſt, hath two remarkable acts, aſſenting and applying.

1. The

1. The assenting Act of Faith is that whereby Faith assenteth to Gods whole Scripture-Record, touching *Jesus Christ* as true, 1 *Ioh.* 5.10,11. That this *Iesus* which is spoken of, in the New-Testament, is no other then the *Christ*, the true *Messiah*, that was foreprophesied of.

Now this bare and naked assenting act of Faith, though it be the first step to the faith of the Gospel: yet one that is an hypocrite may go thus far; see *Luke* 8.13. & *Acts* 8.13. Nay the Devils may, and have come so far, as 1 *Mar.*24. & *Luk.*4.34. & *ver.*41, &c.

2. The applying act of Faith: for that doth follow the assenting act, where it is wrought effectually: now the applying act is that whereby thou having assented to the truth of all Gods Record touching *Christ*, proceedest to apply and appropriate all particularly to thy self, as did *Paul*, *Gal.* 2.20. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And *Thomas*, *Ioh.*20.28. *David*, Psa.18.2.

The

The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, &c. *in whom I will truſt.* This appropriating act of Faith is ſometimes called believeing on him, 1 *Ioh.*5. 10. Sometimes called coming unto him. *Ioh.6.35.* Sometimes it is called receiving him. 1 *Ioh.* 11.12. Sometimes it is called having the ſon, 1 *Ioh.*5.12. Again, it is called taſting him, 1 *Pet.*2.3. again it is called eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood; but to keep cloſe to the thing in hand.

1. When the ſoul is convicted of ſin.

2. When it is brought to a loſs in it ſelf, and ſeeth that it cannot get out of this ſtate of miſery by any thing it hath done, or cannot get out of this ſtate of miſery by any thing it can do.

3. When it cometh to ſee a poſſibility of obtaining Chriſt and Salvation by him, 1 *Tim.*1.16.

4. Then the ſoul cometh a little to believe, and ſo aſſents to the truth which is written, and endeavoureth to apply *Chriſt* and all that he hath done to himſelf. And

And 5. In this act of Believing, he is regenerated and born again, as, 1 *Joh.*5.1.

6. Then the fruits of his Faith, and new Birth doth begin to appear. 1. Faith being thus begun in the soul, the man, or the woman that did kick up the heel before like an untamed Heifer, is now willing to accept of *Christ* upon his own terms, *viz.* Self-denial, bearing the Cross, and following Christ, *Luk.*9.23. & *Joh.*1.12. 2. Faith having received *Christ*, doth taste such sweetness in him, that he is most pretious to the soul, as 1 *Pet.*2.3.7. *And all things in the world are but loss and dung unto him*, *Phil.*3.8. O how is the soul filled with peace and joy in believing. *Rom.*15.13. & *Rom.*5.1. and so it sitteth down under *Christ* his shadow with great delight. 3. Faith having attained to this Spiritual strength and activity, contendeth for, and maketh out after a fuller perfection then ever, after a full assurance, *Col.*2.2. *Heb.*10.22. & *Heb.*6.11,18,19. So that when Faith

is

is wrought in the man, or woman, it worketh a præſent change in the whole man; and when it is grown up, it will wreſtle with God, and cauſe the ſoul to cleave to God, and when troubles, or ſtorms from Men or Devils begin to ariſe, thou wilt ſay with *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and know him to be able to keep me:* Nay thou wilt with *Jacob wreſtle with him, and tell him, thou wilt not let him go untill he bleſs thee, and make good his promiſe to thee.* Gen. 32. 12.25. &c. Nay, thou wilt with the Prophet *David* deſire the Lord to remember the word on which he hath cauſed thee to truſt and hope, in *Pſal.* 119. 49. and tell him that thou wilt pray, and he ſhall hear thy voice, and grant thy requeſt, *Pſal.* 55.17.

1. Nay, thou wilt with the Prophet *Iſa* 62.7. *Give the Lord no reſt, untill he make Jeruſalem the praiſe of the whole earth.* Now then, if we did a little conſider; how that the Almighty God hath

hath engaged to us by Promiſe, and that theſe Promiſes are ſo many for number, and ſo excellent for nature, ſo that there is a Promiſe to bear us up in, and to carry us through in every condition.

2. If we conſider that the Lord doth often affirm, and double and treble one and the ſame thing that he will make it good.

3. To take off all ground of doubting on our part, he entreth into Covenant under hand and ſeal to us.

Then 4. he ſweareth he meaneth as he ſpeaketh by an unchangeable oath: then to put all out of diſpute, he ſealeth his Promiſe, his Covenant, his Oath with the blood of his Son, as hath been largely proved. And laſtly, if all this will not do, if we will not believe in him, and forſake all for him; then he waiteth upon us that he may be gracious unto us, and knocketh at the door of our hearts, and beſeecheth and in-

treateth us to be reconciled unto him: but if all this will not do, he telleth us in his word, all theſe things ſhall riſe up in judgement againſt us, and leaveth us without excuſe, as, *Prov.*1.24,25,26. & *Iſa.*66.4 & *Ier.*7.13,14,15. & *Jer.* 14.12. & *Iſa.*50.1,2. & *Iſa.*65.12. & *Ezek.*8.18. & *Iob.*27.9. & *Iſa.* 1.15. & *Ier.* 11. 14. & *Mic.*3.4. & *Ier.*9.13,14. & *Luk.* 19.42.

Then conſider, that the *Jews* which are ſhortly to be Called, will hug and embrace theſe Promiſes, and believe God in every title of them, ſo that the Almighty will ſo appear in them for believing in him, and laying hold on him, in giving credit to the report that he hath given of his Son, that we read, *Zach.*8.23. *It ſhall come to paſs that ten men out of all Languages, and nations under heaven, ſhall take hold of him that is a Jew, ſaying, we will go with thee, for we have heard that the Lord is with thee.* Then ſhall be brought to paſs that ſaying,

ing, *Isa.*61 9. *And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the People: and all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.* Isa.60.3. *And the Gentiles shall come to their light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Then, then shall be one Shepherd, and one Sheepfold; for the Lord shall be one, and his name one,* Jer.10.16.

Now I shall answer a few Questions that may be in some hearts, as to the business in hand.

*Qu.*1. *Whether God in the bringing of a sinner from the state of nature to the state of grace, doth work in all alike?*

Ans. Under correction, I suppose that the Lord doth work according to the temper of the object that he doth work upon. Some are more stubborn, and knotty, and self-willed: these men are brought many times to the very gate of hell, before the Lord doth heal them: Now some others are more flexible and

teachable, and are won in by the gentle ſtill voice. So that there are degrees in the work of Converſion. God doth ſometimes deal with ſinners, as a Maſter of a family riſing early, cometh to his Servants chamber-door, and giveth them a Call: they all hear their Maſters voice, but only ſome two or three of them aroſe and came to their Maſter, the reſt lay ſtill: then the Maſter cometh the ſecond time, and calleth them, and threateneth them; then two or three more of them aroſe, but the reſt lay ſtill: well, the Maſter cometh the third time with a cudgel, and belaboureth them ſoundly, and telleth them, that if they will not ariſe, and go about his work, he will turn them out of doors, and not own them as his ſervants: Even ſo ſome ſinners are brought in at the firſt call, God opening their hearts as he did the heart of *Lydia*; others muſt have a ſecond, and a third call, before they will anſwer.

Qu. 2. *Which is firſt in the ſoul, Repentance, or Faith?*

Anſ. They be wrought both in the ſoul at once, only the one doth appear in its operation before the other. The firſt part of Repentance, to wit, conviction, contrition, and humiliation, the Lord ordinarily doth work in the ſoul, before it hath power to reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation by a lively juſtifying faith: which hath in it theſe three acts, 1. Aſſent, 2. Reliance, 3. Perſwaſion. And this in Gods ordinary way of working followeth after the firſt part of Repentance before mentioned: but ſometimes Repentance is taken in a large ſenſe for the whole work of Converſion, and ſo godly ſorrow is an effect of faith.

Again, a ſoul cannot come to Chriſt till it goeth out of it ſelf; and it will not go out of it ſelf, untill it ſee the danger of continuing in it ſelf: and this danger worketh fear; this fear worketh ſorrow; and this ſorrow worketh humiliation.

Again, let us consider to whom were the Promises made; and we shall find, to those that were lost: *Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* He telleth us, *The whole need not a Physitian:* And, *He filleth the hungry with good things.* Now a soul is brought thus low by Repentance, before it hath the Faith of Evidence, which is an uniting grace that doth knit the soul to Christ: at which time the promises are entailed to the soul, being its proper joincture. *Gal.*3,22. *Eph.*1.13,&c.

Now I do not, nor have not said, but that the habit of faith is in a soul assoon or before it doth repent; even before the soul doth return from sin, which is the first act of repentance: but the act of faith whereby God giveth a soul power to receive, rely, and apply Christ, followeth in order after. So that the question is not, whether a man must have faith or repentance first, in respect of Gods gift; but which it acteth first

in our apprehenſion, *Joh.* 16. 8. *The Spirit ſhall firſt convince the world of ſin,* (and afterwards in order) *of righteouſnes, and of judgment.*

Chriſt will make a ſoul hunger and thirſt, before he will let it know by faith that it ſhall be filled: He will make the ſoul weary and heavy-laden with ſin, before he will give it faith to believe, and power to come to him for reſt.

In a word, to add no more, he will let his own people ſee the plague of their hearts, before he will take it away.

I have obſerved, that moſt men that preach and write, do hold forth one and the ſame means for the recovering of a Backſlider, as they do for the converſion of a Sinner. But under correction, I ſuppoſe it is eaſier to convert ten Sinners, then to recover one Backſlider: wherefore the Lord in his Word doth preſcribe means of a more high nature (in a ſenſe) for the one, then he doth for

the other; and there ſeemeth to be more joy at the return of a Backſlider, then there is at the converſion of a Sinner. *Luk.*15. We read of a man that had an hundred ſheep, and loſt one, and of a woman that had ten peeces of ſilver, and loſt one; and of a man that had two ſons, and loſt one: Now it is true, theſe are Parables; and Parables ſerve rather to illuſtrate, then to prove: But this I ſuppoſe I have good ground to think; That the *loſt ſheep*, the piece of ſilver, and the *Prodigal* ſon have relation chiefly to a Backſlider that is fallen either in Principles or in practiſe, or in both: Now as it is one thing to preach the Law, and another thing to preach the Goſpel; ſo it is one thing to convert a Sinner, and another thing to recover a Backſlider.

1. A ſinner is brought to ſee his ſin, and his loſt eſtate, by being both convinced of original and actual tranſgreſſion: but a Backſlider muſt be convinced of

of his relapſed or fallen condition, by comparing what he was after converſion, with what he is now. *Rev.* 2. 5. *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.*

2. A Sinner is to come unto God the Father in the name of Chriſt, as to one that he never had any fellowſhip with, but lay in his blood from his creation: but a Backſlider is to come to God as a woman unto her husband, or as a child to his father, from whom he hath taken a Prodigals journey. *Jer.* 3. 14. & *Luk.* 15. 18, 19.

3. A Sinner is to have ſome things renewed in him, that he loſt in the firſt *Adam*; and ſome things to be wrought in him, to make him like the ſecond *Adam*: but a Backſlider is to have thoſe things renewed in him, that he is backſliden from.

Now the Scripture doth ſpeak of a twofold Backſliding: the one recoverable; the other is perpetual and irrecoverable. 1. There

There is a perpetual or unrecoverable backsliding, *Amos* 8.14. *They shall fall and never rise again*, Gal.5.8.& Jer.8.5. *These people are slidden back with a perpetual back-sliding*, ver. 31. *I will consume them for ever*,(saith the Lord.)

I do not say or mean that any man that had true Grace, shall thus fall or backslide as never to return; but those only that did seem to have Grace, *Heb.* 10.15. & *Heb.*6.4,5,6.

1. This back-sliding is threatened, *Heb.* 10.38,39.

2. This is severely plagued, *Mat.*12. 43,44, & 45. compared with 2 *Pet.* 2. 20,21,22, &c. (as there ye may read.)

2. There is a back-sliding that doth admit of many degrees, that is recoverable and remediable in part,or in whole.

1. There was an universal backsliding when we all fell in the first *Adam.*

2. There is a National back-sliding; but I shall speak nothing of these; for I do but name them, to make way for what

what I have to hold forth.

3. There is a perſonal back-ſliding, which many precious Chriſtians, by reaſon of the power of corruption and the malice of *Satan*, are many times not only ſubject to, but overtaken with more or leſs.

1. There is a falling into ſin, and a preſent riſing out of it again by Faith and Repentance, *Prov.* 24. 16. *A juſt man falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again*, Mic. 7. 8. *When I fall I ſhall ariſe again*: So *Hoſ.* 14. 4.

2. There is a back-ſliding in Judgement, when a mans Judgement is corrupted; being led by Affection rather then truth: So he comes to judge according to outward appearance, rather then to inward evidence, and ſo at laſt reſts upon a form, not minding the power: So that which was once precious is now vile; that which was higheſt in his judgemnt is now loweſt.

3. There is a back-ſliding in princi-

ples;

ples ; for a mans judgement may be clear, that ſuch a thing muſt be done, but the principle from whence the thing is done may be for ſelf, or for ſelf-ends.

4. There is a back-ſliding in heart, or affection, as *Prov.* 14.14. *The back-ſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways*: Now when we ſet our hearts or affections upon any thing beneath God, we revolt from the Creator, and cleave to the Creature, and (in a ſence) may be ſaid to be back-ſliden in heart, *Ier.* 5.23. *But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone, neither ſay they in their heart, Let us return and fear the Lord*, &c.

5. There is a back-ſliding in practiſe, and theſe muſt remember from whence they are fallen, and do their firſt works: So it was with the Saints at *Epheſus*, *Rev.* 2.5. And is it not ſo with the Saints in *England* at this day? Doth not wofull experience prove the truth hereof: as in *Hoſ.* 11.7, *My people are bent to back-*

ſliding

ſliding from me, Ier.5.6. Their back ſlidings are increaſed,&c. See *Iſa.1.5.*

6. There is a deep back-ſliding, that is not eaſily, nor ſpeedily recovered, *Iſa. 31.6. From whom the children of Iſrael have deeply revolted.* See *Hoſ.5.2.* and *Hoſ.9.9.*

Now when the revolt hath been deep and great, the return muſt be anſwerable unto both, for manner and meaſure; now the ſoul cometh into, or falleth into this ſtate, by theſe ſpringings up of ſin, without reſiſtance.

1. There is a motion to ſin.
2. The will is incited.
3. There is a delight conceived.
4. A conſent.
5. Practiſe, or acting.
6. Pleaſure, or inward rejoycing in a Sin.
7. A cuſtom, or continuing in a ſin.
8. Excuſing of it:

And 9. A defending, or endeavouring (at leaſt) an extenuating of it.

Now

Now the ſoul that is come ſo far into ſin is deeply revolted; if the ſoul ſo far back-ſlidden ſhall fall but two degrees further into ſin, it will be loſt and undone, and never able to return. 1. Is publique boaſting of its committing any ſin: 2. Is a being given up to a reprobate ſenſe; this is a total, final, and malicious falling away: thus they that ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, 1. crucifie the Son of God afreſh, 2. put him to an open ſhame, 3. tread him under foot, and 4. count or eſteem his blood as an unholy thing. Oh! what horrid contempt and malice is this againſt the Son, againſt the Son of God: See *Heb.* 6. 6. and *Mat.* 27. 39, 40, & *Heb.* 10. 29.

Now I ſhall touch upon the means that God hath appointed in his word, for the reſtoring, recovering, and regaining of a back-ſlidden man or woman; and herein, if I had more time, I ſhould make more diſtinctions in means, according to the degrees of back-ſliding, that

that I might (as a true Physitian) be applying Cordials, where the condition of the Patient doth require it; and Corrosives and Purges, where the Disease is more dangerous; and yet all to flow from the Spirit of meekness.

First, (then as thou wouldst have another to deal with thee, when thou art fallen) with much meekness, tenderness, and gentleness, as in *Gal. 6. 1, 2. Considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted*, so also deal with thy backslidden brother.

2. (Thy Spirit being as aforesaid, fitted to deal with thy fallen brother or Sister:) thou art to proceed in the next place to endeavour to convince thy Friend that is backslidden, what danger he or she are in; for there are many poor souls fallen deeply, and do not know of it, nor yet once suspect it, but think with the *Laodiceans*, *Rev.* 3. 17. that they be in as good a condition, if not in better then any Christians under Heaven,

ven. *Rev.2.5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.* And a man may eaſily know whether he be fallen, and how far is he is backſliden, if he will but deal faithfully with his own ſoul in theſe and the like enquiries.

1. Examine thy love, whether that be as much to God, to his people, to thine enemies as heretofore.

2. Art thou as much in ſelf-denial now as heretofore? doſt thou deny thy natural ſelf, ſinful ſelf, and thy religious ſelf, more now then heretofore?

3. Doſt thou increaſe, or decreaſe in thy faith on Jeſus Chriſt? Is Chriſt more precious in thine eyes now, then heretofore? Or elſe ſee if thou haſt not a lower eſteem now, then once thou hadſt of him, when nothing would ſatisfie thee but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified; and now he is (it may be) leaſt in thy thoughts and mind.

4. Art thou ſo frequent in prayer, reading, hearing, conferring, and enquiring

quiring into the state of thy soul, as once thou wast?

5. Art thou more constant in doing his will with more cheerfulness and delight then formerly? Or else (in a word) art thou not backsliden in every one of these? Do not deceive thy self: Is it so, or not? Hast thou not lost thy first love and faith in Christ? and are not thy works now less for Christ then thy former? *Jer.* 2. 2. *Remember the day of thine espousals:* then thou hadst high thoughts of me; then I was in all thy thoughts, then I was all thy heart could wish, thy tongue could ask, or thy mind conceive; then thou couldest part with all for me, (saith Christ) but now thou hast *forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewen out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no waters.* Now ask thy soul, as in the presence of God, guilty, or not guilty? backsliden, or not backsliden? Deal ingeniously: what is highest in thy judgment? what is dear-

eſt in thy affections? what is ſtrongeſt in thy will? what is moſt conſtant in thy purpoſes and reſolutions? Doſt thou live out of thy ſelf, in the Spirit, above the world, upon Chriſt, unto God? Now, O ſoul, what anſwer doſt thou make? Guilty, or not guilty? fallen, or not fallen? backſliden, or not backſliden?

Qu. I fear I am backſliden indeed, ſaith the poor conſidering ſoul: How ſhall I recover my ſelf again?

Anſ. Rev. 2.5. *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent:* that is, by returning the ſame way back thou didſt fall off: which if thou doſt not ſpeedily do, then,

1. Thy brother or ſiſter ſeeing thee to be overtaken in a fault, are to endeavour to reſtore thee with the ſpirit of meekneſs, *Gal.* 6.12.

2. If this doth not take with the backſliden or fallen party, then he is to take one or two more with him: and if he hear

hear them, well; if not, the Church muſt know it, and endeavour to convince him, and to recover him, *Mat.* 18.15, 16, 17.

3. But if he hear not the Church, then he is to be purged out (as the old leaven) in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſuch a man is to be delivered to Satan, for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the Spirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus, 1 *Cor.* 5.4,5,6,7.8.

4. All this is to be done in the ſpirit of love, in order to his or her healing and recovering, as being Gods way to bring the backſliden party or perſon back, 2 *Theſſ.* 3.14,15.

Now when a ſoul is ſenſible of his backſliding, he will be ſaying in theſe or the like words: *Heal me, O God, and I ſhall be healed; turn me, and I ſhall be turned; Oh ſave me, and I ſhall be ſaved: Take away this miſgiving and backſliding out of mine heart, and give me ſteadineſs and ſtableneſs of heart; renew a right ſpi-*

rit within me; restore me to those joyes that I was wont to find in thee: Oh cast me not away, with whom thou hast taken so much pains, whom thou hast bought with so dear a price: and look upon that ever-streaming fountain of thy Sons blood. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief: Oh speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed. Return to thy true rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: Renew thy loving kindness within me, O gracious Father, and let me be renewed in the spirit of my mind: heal my backslidings, & love me freely, according to thy promise, Hos. 14. 4.

Now if thou dost doubt whether ever the work of grace were wrought in thee in truth, yea or no, and so canst not come to God as a Backslider; then put thy self in the room of a Sinner, and come as a Sinner to him.

But if thou art sure that thou art born again, and that thou didst believe the Gospel, and embrace *Christ*, and repent of, and turn from sin, then in order to thy

thy recovery, consider these things following.

1. The Lord calleth to thee to remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, as in *Rev.*2.5.

2. He calleth upon thee, and inviteth thee to return to him, as in *Ezek.*33.11. *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, &c.*

3. He promiseth to accept of thee, and to heal thee, as in *Hos.*14.4. *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.*

4. He assureth thee, that although those that are his may Fall, yet they shall not fall utterly, *Mat.*24.24. and in *Phil.*1.6. & 1 *Pet.*1.5. & *Rom.*8. 1, & 35, 36, 37, 38. & *Heb.*12.2. & 1 *Pet.* 1. 23, & *Prov.* 24.16. & *Jude* v.24. & *Mat.* 7. 25. & *Luk.*19.10. *Jer.*32.40.

5. The Lord telleth us, that though we revolt, and backslide, and change, *yet he is the same yesterday, to day, and the same for ever*, Mal.3.6. & 2 *Sam.* 7.14, 15. & *Psal.*89.30. to 37. *Psal.*54.5,6,7, 8. & *Joh.*13.1.

Once his ſervant, and ever his ſervant, once his childe, and for ever his childe; once in his love, and for ever in his love; ſo that thou mayſt boldly ſay with thy brother *Paul*, *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God in Chriſt? Shall tribulation? or diſtreſs? or perſecution? or famine? or nakedneſs? or peril? or ſword? No* (ſaith Chriſt) *the father that gave them me is greater then I, and none ſhall be able to pluck them out of his hands*, Joh. 10. 28, 29. See *Mat.* 16. 18. Again, *Thou waſt darkneſs, but now art light in the Lord: wert loſt, art found: wert dead, art alive: hadſt not obtained mercy, but now haſt obtained mercy: wert not a people, but now art a people.* God the Father diſdaineth not to account thee his Son or Daughter: the Son is not aſhamed to call thee Brother or Siſter; the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to make thee his Temple to dwell in. In a word, thou art Called effectually, Juſtified freely, Sanctified graciouſly, and

ſhalt be Glorified eternally; everlaſting condemnation ſhall not befall thee: nothing in the world ſhall be able to ſeparate thee from God; all things in the world ſhall work for thy good; all the Promiſes are thine, all the richeſt Graces are thine, all the ſweeteſt comforts are thine.

All the higheſt Priviledges, thou haſt a ſhare in; and ſhalt be a partaker of all the nobleſt hopes: What ſhall I more ſay? Chriſt is thine, and in, and with him, all good things; O happy, happy, yea thrice happy is that man, or woman, ſon, or daughter, that thus have the Lord to be their God: *Return* (now) *O ye backſliding children*, ſaith the Lord, *For, I am married unto you*, Jer. 3.1. Again, *Jer.* 3.22. *Return ye backſliding children, and I will heal your backſlidings.* There is firſt, God his gracious invitation of them that were backſliden: Secondly, here is his ſure promiſe, And I will heal not only your backſliding,

but (in the plural number) your backslidings: as if he had said, all the breaches made between you and me shall be made up; I will pass them all by, and be reconciled again to you; yea, I will remove all those evils, and repair all those ruins, which by your revolts from me, you had brought upon your selves. *Isa.*57.18. & *Ier.* 3.40. & *Zach.*10.6. *And they shall become as though I had not cast them off; and I shall be to them as the tender father was to the prodigal Son, upon his returning home: I will meet him, I will embrace him, I will kiss him, I will cloath him with the best robe* (which is the righteousness of Christ:) *I will put a ring on his finger, I will kill the fatted calf; for this my son was lost, and is found,* &c. In a word, I will cause thy soul to return to its rest, that it had almost lost, by its backsliding from me, *Psal.*116.7. *I will restore unto it the joy of my salvation,* Psal.51.12. *I will renew a right spirit in it,* Psal.51.10. *I will renew him in*

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the ſpirit of his minde, Epheſ. 4. 23. I will work all this upon thee, O thou backſliding childe, by putting thee in minde from whence thou art fallen and acquainting thee of thy relation to me, and my intereſt in thee, that ſo if thou canſt not claim a part in me, thou ſhalt ſee me claiming an intereſt in thee; *For thou art my creature, I made thee*, Gen. 1. 26. and when thou didſt fall from me in the firſt *Adam*, I provided a ſecond *Adam* to recover thee, as *Rom.* 5. 18.

And when I had called thee from a ſtate of Nature into a ſtate of Grace, I had planted in thy Soul, Faith, and Repentance and Obedience: yet in time through thy negligence, and *Satans* vigilancy thou hadſt revolted from me; but I do ſtill claim an intereſt in thee; wherefore return unto me, and I will heal thy backſlidings: for *I am married unto thee*, *Hoſ.* 14. 4. & *Ioh.* 3. 14.

Object. *Oh but I have been backſlidden from him at leaſt twelve years, ſaith one; and I have layn in a backſliding, revolting*

volting condition, at leaſt eighteen years, ſaith a ſecond: and I have continued in a ſtate of backſliding at leaſt, thirty eight years ſince Chriſt wrought upon me at firſt, ſaith a third, and as yet I ſee no hope of coming out of this revolted condition, ſeeing I have layn ſo long in it.

Anſw. We read of a woman (in Scripture) that had an iſſue of blood twelve years, and that ſhe was healed by *Chriſt*, *Mar.* 5. 25, 26, 27. Again, we read of a woman that had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and yet ſhe was healed by Chriſt, *Luk.* 11. 12, 13.

Again, we read *Joh.* 5. 5. of a man that was impotent 38. years, and yet at laſt Chriſt calleth to him and healeth him. Now all this is written for our learning, and doth in effect declare unto us, that *Chriſt* can cure all diſeaſes in our bodies or ſouls, of what nature, degree, kinde, or continuance ſoever they be.

But if the Lord hath in ſome meaſure

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since thy backsliding from him, forsaken thy soul, and withdrawn himself, as in the case of *David*, *Heman*, *Asaph*, and the Church her self, *Psal.* 22.1. & in *Psa.* 88.15,16. & *Psal.* 77. & *Cant.* 3.1,2. & 5,6,7,8. Yet while thou art in this sad state, consider, Christ is nigh thee, ready to restore thee: *Hagar* had a well by her, when she was mourning for water, *Gen.* 21.16. & 19. How sad were the two disciples going to *Emmaus* for want of Christ, and yet Christ at that time was talking with them, *Luk.* 24. 14,15, *&c.* How did *Mary* stand weeping by the Sepulchre of Christ, supposing his dead body was thence stollen away, though Christ risen stood close by her, *Joh.* 20. 14,15. *David* was told after his relapse by the Prophet that the Lord had put away his sin; but because he had not the apprehension thereof, he wanted joy, and groaned under his broken bones a good while after, *Psal.* 51.8,12.

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WHen the Lord hath converted a Sinner, and brought him out of the ſtate of ſin and miſery into a ſtate of grace and love; the Lord layeth many commands upon that ſoul to put on the whole armour of Chriſt, and to ſtand upon his guard. 1 *Cor.* 16. 13. *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit ye like men, be ſtrong.* Phil. 4. 1. *Stand faſt in the Lord:* that you may ſtedfaſtly believe, and conſtantly profeſs your intereſt in, and relation to the ſame Father, Son, and Spirit. 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 8. *For now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord. Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free,* Gal. 5. 1. *Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,* Eph. 4. 1. *Contend for the faith of the Goſpel,* Jud. *v.* 3. *Try the ſpirits whether they be of God,* 1 Joh. 4. 1, 2, 3. *Give all diligence to make thy calling and election ſure,* firm, and ſtedfaſt, that thou mayſt be unmoveable, knowing thy houſe to be built upon the Rock; ſo that the winds

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of Satan, and the floods of the world, nay the gates of Hell it self shall not prevail against thee. *Wherefore be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* Ephes. 6. 10.

And great need there is for a Christian to stand upon his guard continually, and to be strong in the Lord constantly, because he hath so many enemies within him, and without him, that do take all advantages, and improve all opportunities to trip up thy heels, and to winnow thee as wheat. Satan looketh upon thee, and maketh out after thee, as a Jailor doth after one that hath broken prison. In a word, the Lord telleth us, *Eph.* 6. 12. That *we wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities and powers, against the Rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickednesses in high places.*

Now as there is natural means to be used, not only for the cure, but also for the prevention of a distemper in the outward

ward man: ſo alſo there is means more ſpiritual to be uſed, not only for the cure of a backſliden ſoul, but alſo for the preſerving and keeping of it from falling.

I ſhall inſtance in ſome particulars, whereof I have had a little experience: which Rules being a little obſerved, in all places, in all companies, at all times, they will be as ſo many iron-gates made faſt, locked and bolted between thee and thy ſoul-murthering enemies.

1. Be frequent in the exerciſing of all holy means of preſerving and increaſing grace, and ſtarving and deſtroying ſin: as hearing, reading, meditating, and conferring about ſpiritual things. See *Act.* 2.42. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and breaking of bread, and in prayer.* And theſe continued in faith; while others fell off, ſome to another Goſpel, ſome to reſpect perſons, as if Chriſt were divided; and others fell off, and em-

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braced the world, as *Demas*, &c.

2. Be often reading, and applying thoſe promiſes that the Lord hath made to thee, that he will keep thee from falling: for as there are promiſes that thou ſhalt not fall totally and utterly, ſo there are promiſes which (if applied) would keep thee from falling at all. 1 *Cor.*1.8. 2 *Pet.*1.10, *Pſal.*125.1. *Prov.*10.30. *Heb.* 10.23. 2 *Pet.*3.17. *Jud. v.*24. *Eph.* 3. 16,17,18,19.

Now if we keep cloſe to God in applying theſe promiſes, ſtanding upon our guard in his ſtrength, and armed with his armour, Men or Devils ſhall not eaſily trip up our heels; but we ſhall abide in him, and have his word abide in us: we ſhall ask ability from him to ſtand faſt, and he ſhall give it us, *Joh.*15.7.

But if we begin to follow him afar off as *Peter*, we ſhall quickly with *Peter* deny him: When we will forſake him the Fountain of living waters, and hew to our ſelves broken ciſterns that will hold

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no waters: then for ſome Reaſons, the Lord doth for a time leave us to our ſelves:

1. To ſhew us our inſtability and weakneſs.

2. To humble and abaſe us, to cut our combs, that we may not lift up our ſelves above others, as *Peter* did, who told Chriſt that he would not forſake him, though all the reſt did, and all the reſt ſtood; and he fell to his deeper humiliation.

3. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer us to fall to make us the more watchfull over our ſelves and others, that we be not too bold through ſelf-confidence, and carnal ſecurity.

4. The Lord doth this to bring us cloſer unto himſelf, in whom are all our ſprings, from whom are all our ſupplies.

5. To work in us a tender-heartedneſs, and compaſſionate feeling of our brethren, and ſiſters frailties, *Gal.6.1,2.*

6. To

6. To try the truth and ſtrength of our Faith and Love to him and his Lambs, and Sheep; and to our enemies.

7. That ſo our love to him might be renewed and increaſed, by beholding his love to us, in reſtoring and lifting us up when we were fallen, that ſo we might magnifie the Attribute of his Mercy, for healing our back-ſliding.

A third Rule or Remedie to keep us from falling or back-ſliding, is this: we ſhould keep freſh in our minds the vanity and uncertainty of our ſelves, friends, eſtates, relations, *&c.* (as I have ſpoken to at large in my other Book lately compoſed, and entituled *The Weavers ſhuttle*, &c.)

4. A fourth Rule or Remedie to keep us from falling: Conſider, that if thou ſin, thou doſt crucifie Chriſt afreſh, and putteſt him thereby (as much as in thee lieth) to an open ſhame, thou doſt diſhonour God, and grieve his people, and harden the world in their ſins.

In a word, by falling, thou doſt become a ſervant to Sin and *Satan*, and (in a ſenſe) an enemy to God, and to thy ſelf in point of thy well-being: See *Deut.*5.29.

5. Decline and avoid all prophane, unprofitable, and unchriſtian company: (*For if thou touch pitch, thou wilt be defiled therewith*) and frequent the fellowſhip of the Saints, and thou ſhalt grow ſtronger and ſtronger; and wiſer and wiſer, *Prov.*13.20.

6. Humbly entertain and nouriſh the motions of the Spirit of *Chriſt* within thee, and reject and bring into captivity the motions of thine own ſpirit. And that thou mayſt diſcern the one from the other, conſider,

1. The true Spirit moveth to thee to that, and only that, which is agreeable to the Scriptures: the evil, falſe, and deceitful ſpirit in thy ſelf, and of the Devil, moveth thee to think, ſpeak, and do all thoſe things that are contrary to the Scriptures. 2. The

2. The good Spirit of *Christ* moveth us to that which denyeth our ſelves, and exalteth God alone and his Word, *Ioh.*16.13,14.

3. Again, thirdly, the motions of Gods Spirit are not carried on but with abundance of oppoſition within, and without, on the right hand, and on the left.

4. The good Spirit of God moveth thee to avoid ſin rather then croſſes; but thine own Spirit, and *Satan* will move thee to avoid croſſes rather then ſins.

5. The holy Spirit of God moveth thee to pleaſe God rather then men; but thy own ſpirit moveth thee to diſpleaſe God rather then a worldly wiſe, rich, and potent friend of thine, and ſo to fall to lying, deceiving, and ſhifting, to make all ſeem fair with men, and yet knoweſt in thy heart that God is offended therewith, when thou doſt endeavour to avoid outward ſhame or diſ-

eſteem among men rather then ſecret ſin; as, 2 *Sam.* 13. 12,13. *Tamar* ſpake to her brother *Amnon* at that time before he raviſhed her.

A ſeventh Rule or Remedy to keep us from falling, is this, let us daily examine the ſtate of our ſouls, and endeavour the cure of our diſeaſes, aud ſupply of our Spiritual wants, that we may grow being daily fed with good and ſeaſonable food: read the Word of God to enlighten thy underſtanding; meditate on what thou haſt read for the help of thy memory; and communicate of what thou haſt learned to quicken thy affections: and practiſe what thou doſt know, that thou mayſt ſay with *Paul*, 2 *Cor* 1.12. *This is our rejoycing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, we have had our converſations among you.*

The eighth Rule or Remedie to keep a ſoul from falling, may be this: Let us have a godly jealouſie over every little

little ſin, and preſently renew Faith and Repentance after every ſlip: and ſo although we ſhall ſlip through unbelief, let us riſe again by Faith, and we ſhall have peace with God through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, *Rom.* 5.1. compared with *Prov.*24.16.

The ninth Rule, Let us walk more by precept, then by example; be not ſatisfied with the doing of ſuch and ſuch things, unleſs thou haſt done it in obedience unto the Gommand of God, out of love to him and Faith in him. And that thou mayſt ſo do, 1. Be much in examination, as 2 *Cor.* 13.5. Then ſecondly, grieve not the Spirit of God by any known corruption (by yielding to it willingly) *Eph.* 4.30. Thirdly, cheriſh and improve all Graces given you: for every Grace hath an evidence in it, *viz.* by knowledge we diſcern our ſelves; by Faith we appropriate to our ſelves: and by hope we patiently wait for the receiving of what we know and believe.

10. Abide in Chriſt; and for the opening of this tenth, and laſt Rule or Direction, it being of higheſt concernment, namely for a Chriſtian to abide in Chriſt, I ſhall ſpeak briefly, 1. To the nature of it. 2. To the tryals of it. 3. The way of obtaining it. 4. The inducements to it.

Firſt, of the nature of it. There is a twofold abiding in Chriſt: the firſt hath relation to Election; the other to manifeſtation or apprehenſion of our intereſt in him, and relation to him by faith as a Saviour. The firſt of theſe abidings in him, men nor devils are able to ſhake, alter, or break, it being begotten by Gods love to us in Chriſt from eternity, before we had done good or evil; but the latter of theſe, to wit the manifeſtation of our being in his love, this is oft-times clouded, darkened, and overſhadowed by our ſinning, and Gods withdrawing, *Ezek.*39.23. & *Iſa.*59.2. He then that doth abide in Chriſt, may

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ſee it by faith, and know it by theſe and the like diſcoveries or tryals here ſet, as they follow.

1. He that abideth in Chriſt, is often purged and tryed in the fire of affliction and perſecution. *Joh.*15.2. & c.19.2.

2. He getteth ſome ſpiritual advantage by every affliction, all working together for his good, *Rom.* 8.28. *Joh.* 3. 15. *Pſal.*119.67,71.

3. He endeavoureth to walk as Chriſt walked, holily, uprightly, unblameably, ſpiritually, and heavenly.

1. Chriſt walked moſt purely and inoffenſively, both before God and men, *Heb.*4.15. & *Heb.*7.26.

2. He walked moſt ſelf-denyingly, as 2 *Cor*.8,9.

3. He was obedient to his Heavenly Father in all things, *Joh.*4.34. He loſt his life that he might not loſe his obedience.

4. *Chriſt* walked moſt humbly and meekly, *Mat.*11.28. & *Phil.*2.5,6,7,8.

5. *Chriſt* walked moſt lovingly towards poor ſinners, *Luk* 4.18,19,20. & *Mat*.12.19,20.

And laſtly, *Chriſt* walked moſt Spiritually and heavenly; He lived on earth as if he had been in heaven: he had ſpiritual conſolations, and heavenly leſſons from all ſorts of earthly objects preſented before him. *Ioh*. 4.13,14. & *Joh* 6.26,27. & *Ioh*.15.1.

Now he that abideth in Chriſt, (nay he that ſaith he abideth in him) *ought ſo to walk as he walked*. 1 *Ioh*.2.6.

Nay further, he that nameth the name of Chriſt, ought to depart from iniquity, 2 *Tim*.2.19. And ſo much ſhall ſerve to be ſpoken of the firſt branch of the tenth Rule or Direction, concerning the nature of our abiding in Chriſt.

The ſecond thing to be inſiſted upon, is the trials of it, how a man may know that he is in Chriſt.

1. Then, he that doth abide in *Chriſt*, doth abide in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, 2 *Ioh*.9.

2 *Joh.9.ver.* Now if any man ask what this Doctrine of Christ is, he may finde it distinctly laid down in *Acts* 2. 42. (in these words) *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and prayers.*

2. He that abideth in *Christ*, hath the Spirit of Christ, 1 *Joh.*4. & *Rom.*13.8.9. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, &c.*

3. They are become new Creatures; *Old things are past away, all things are become new,* 2 *Cor.*5.17.

4. He that abideth in Christ, is daily *crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts, Gal.*5.24.

5. *He walketh not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom.*8.1,2.

6. And lastly, he that abideth in *Christ* hath a sweet conformity to *Christ.*

1. To his gracious Image, that is, in righteousnes and true holines, *Eph.*4.24.

Again, 2. To his glorious Image, to wit, when we shall be like him in glory, *Phil.* 3. 20. & 1 *Joh.*3.2,3. *It doth not yet appear, &c.*

3. To

3. To his afflicted Image that he was in for us: that is, when we ſuffer any thing with him, and for him, as *Rom.* 8. 17. & 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. And this is all I ſhall now write (becauſe I deſire to be as brief as may be) concerning the two firſt things: that are, the nature; and what are the tryals of our abiding in *Chriſt*. There are two things more that I ſhall briefly hint at.

1. The way of attaining an abiding in, and conformity to Chriſt.

2. The Inducements and Motives to get both of theſe, as followeth. 1. For the way of attaining theſe, that is, when the Spirit of *Chriſt* hath convinced thee of ſin, by which thou doſt come to ſee that thou art a childe of wrath by nature or birth, and a childe of the Devil by practiſe; foraſmuch, as *all the imaginations of thy heart are only evil, and that continually*, as *Gen.* 6. 5. So that all the plagues, judgements, and miſeries mentioned in the whole Bible are due unto thee,

thee, by reaſon whereof thou doſt come to ſee the miſery of thy ſelf, and all men and women in the World that are out of *Chriſt*; and ſo by degrees thou doſt come to ſee the worth and excellency, and the neceſſity thou haſt of *Chriſt*, and the poſſibility thou haſt of obtaining him (to be thy Saviour as well as others) ſeeing he hath pardoning mercy for the worſt of ſinners if they come to him; and that he offereth and tendereth mercy freely, and generally to any ſinner, whatſoever ſinner he be, and whenſoever he doth come, &c. Now for thy way of attaining him, which is the thing I am come unto; 1. There is in the work of turning or coming unto *God* by *Chriſt*, a giving up of thy ſelf unto him in an everlaſting Covenant, and ſo thou then takeſt *Chriſt* the head to be thine, and ſo giveſt up thy ſelf to be his: in which ſpiritual work there is the reſignation of the ſoul wholly unto God in an everlaſting Covenant to be his: and in this great work,

work, there be theſe ſix ſteps or degrees enſuing.

1. There is the aſſenting act of Faith infuſed into the ſoul by God in regeneration, as *Eph.*2.8. & *1oh.*1.12.13.

2. Then (ſecondly) the ſoul beginneth to have ſuch deſires after *Chriſt*, that it is altogether reſtleſs without him, and endeavoureth to apply and appropriate *Chriſt* with all his benefits to its ſelf, as *Gal.*2.20. & *1oh.*20.28.

3. Then the ſoul is willing to accept of *Chriſt* upon (not its own but) *Chriſts* terms, to forſake all for him, and to take up its croſs, and follow him, as *Luk.*9.23. & *Luk.*14.26,27.

4. Then the ſoul beginneth to taſte ſuch ſweetneſs in him, and to know indeed that *Chriſt* is moſt precious to the ſoul, and all things in the world are but loſs and dung in compariſon of him. Oh how is the ſoul filled with joy and peace in believing! and ſo it ſits down under Chriſts ſhadow with great delight.

5. That

5. That Soul that hath received Christ, hath an earneſt breathing after a further enjoyment of him, and communion with him, and conformitie to him.

6. The Soul having attained to this ſpiritual ſtrength, and activity, it goeth on, and contendeth for a fuller perfection, even after a full aſſurance; which full aſſurance is obtained by true faith reflecting upon its own acts, and ſeeing it ſelf believe, & ſo is aſſured, as 2 Tim. 1. 12. *For, I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him againſt that day.* And though every believer reacheth not this full aſſurance, nor any believer retaineth it at all times: yet full aſſurance can no more be plucked by men or Devils from a ſtrong faith wholly, then light or heat can be ſeverd from the Sun. And ſo having breifly ended 1. concerning the nature of true faith 2. The trials of it: and 3. the way of attaining it: I proceed here in the fourth place, briefly

alſo

5. *Chriſt* walked moſt lovingly towards poor ſinners, *Luk.* 4.18,19,20. & *Mat.*12. 19,20.

And laſtly, *Chriſt* walked moſt Spiritually and heavenly; He lived on earth as if he had been in heaven: he had ſpiritual conſolations, and heavenly leſſons from all ſorts of earthly objects preſented before him. *Ioh.* 4.13,14. & *Ioh* 6.26,27. & *Ioh.*15.1.

Now he that abideth in Chriſt, (nay he that ſaith he abideth in him) *ought ſo to walk as he walked.* 1 *Ioh.*2.6.

Nay further, he that nameth the name of Chriſt, ought to depart from iniquity, 2 *Tim.* 2.19. And ſo much ſhall ſerve to be ſpoken of the firſt branch of the tenth Rule or Direction, concerning the nature of our abiding in Chriſt.

The ſecond thing to be inſiſted upon, is the trials of it, how a man may know that he is in Chriſt.

1. Then, he that doth abide in *Chriſt*, doth abide in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, 2 *Ioh.*9.

2 *Joh.9.ver.* Now if any man ask what this Doctrine of Christ is, he may finde it distinctly laid down in *Acts* 2. 42. (in these words) *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and prayers.*

2. He that abideth in *Christ*, hath the Spirit of Christ, 1 *Joh.*4. & *Rom.*13.8.9. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, &c.*

3. They are become new Creatures; *Old things are past away, all things are become new,* 2 *Cor.*5.17.

4. He that abideth in Christ, is daily *crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts, Gal.*5.24.

5. *He walketh not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom.*8.1,2.

6. And lastly, he that abideth in *Christ* hath a sweet conformity to *Christ.*

1. To his gracious Image, that is, in righteousnes and true holines, *Eph.*4.24.

Again, 2. To his glorious Image, to wit, when we shall be like him in glory, *Phil.* 3. 20. & 1 *Joh.*3.2,3. *It doth not yet appear, &c.*

3. To

3. To his afflicted Image that he was in for us: that is, when we ſuffer any thing with him, and for him, as *Rom.* 8. 17. & 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. And this is all I ſhall now write (becauſe I deſire to be as brief as may be) concerning the two firſt things: that are, the nature; and what are the tryals of our abiding in *Chriſt*. There are two things more that I ſhall briefly hint at.

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also to write of the inducements or motives to perswade poor sinners to get both faith and assurance. 1. From the benefits arising to those that already have or shall have, and act with it. 2. The second might be taken from the hurt and danger that shall befall all those that neglect, or will never care to have it. But because the time alotted me, and the strength given me, are now spun out both to the last thred, and my days are flying away faster then the weavers shuttle, (and I am almost ready to cut off like a weaver,) I will touch onely upon the former of these two, (to wit,) The benefits of having, and acting by faith; namely the blessed condition of a man or woman that doth abide in Christ by faith, keeping up the garment of Christs righteousness within him, and wearing the vesture of an holy conversation, that it may be seen without.

1. If we abide in him, we shall have fellowship and communion with him:

your bodies to be burnt, all is nothing, if th[illegible] wanting, Joh. 3.19. *This is condemnation, that [illegible] is come into the world, and men love darkness [illegible] than light.* In a word, binde all your sins toget[illegible] in a bundle, (except this sin of unbelief) [illegible] put them in a ballance together, and put this sin [illegible] unbelief in the other ballance, you shall find th[illegible] unbelief will weigh down all the rest; and fro[illegible] this unbelief, as the root, springs all other evils, [illegible] the branches.

Seventhly, Consider further, God doth seek [illegible] sinners first; Therefore it is said, the Lord Chri[illegible] came *to seek and to save them that were lost.* Is[illegible] 45. 22. *Look unto me and be you saved all ye en[illegible] of the earth. The Spirit and the Bride say come, [illegible] let him that is a thirst come, and take of the Wat[illegible] of life freely.*

Eighthly, Consider, the Lord sends forth [illegible] grace to allure thee, and to entice thee, a sinn[illegible] to come to him; He doth with cords of lo[illegible] draw the heart to come; He sends forth his me[illegible] cy to stand before the soul, and tender its serv[illegible] (as it were) to the sinful soul, Hos. 2. 14. *There-fore will I allure them saith the Lord.* There wa[illegible] great breach between this people and God, [illegible] you may see at large in this Chapter; And [illegible] saith the Lord, *I will allure them.* Hos. 11. 4. *will draw them with the cords of men, with [illegible] bands of love.*

Ninthly, the Lord is ſo yielding unto his creatures, that, to keep his own honour and glory, he cannot yield further. At firſt, we are all going aſtray; the Lord cals us back. 2. We were going to priſon; the Lord ſteps in, ſaying, I will provide a Surety. The Covenant of Works requires ſatisfaction, ſaith the Lord; I am content to take this in a Surety. We are like a beggar, begging an alms of one that paſſeth by; to whom it is anſwered, I will give thee, O beggar, that which thou deſireſt; but thou muſt come and fetch it. I cannot come, ſaith the begar; I want legs. I will give thee legs (ſaith the giver) that thou mayſt come. But (ſaith the beggar) when I am come, I have no hands to receive that which you will give me. I will give thee hands alſo. Oh, but I want wiſdom to make uſe of that gift; I will give thee wiſdom, ſaith the Lord. Oh that ever ſo glorious a God ſhould ſo far ſtoop and yield to his poor creatures, as to anſwer all queſtions, clear all doubts, and take away all ſcruples!

Tenthly, he yet comes nearer to a ſinner, (as it were) and doth profeſs, that the greateſt ſins that ever they have committed againſt him, ſhall not hinder them from coming to him, nor him from pardoning them, Iſa 1. 18. *Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow.*

Oh

Oh here the Lord proclaims, that all thy ſins paſt ſhall be done away; thy continuance in ſin will be thy undoing, if any thing.

Eleventhly, Again conſider, the Lord doth in his Word uſe very powerful arguments to draw the heart to be reconciled to him; He doth not only offer mercy, and ſet it before the ſoul, but he doth labour with ſtrong reaſons, and arguments, and motives, to draw the ſoul to himſelf, and doth uſe theſe arguments that will take the heart moſt. Sometimes he doth draw arguments from his equity, Ezek. 18. 25. *Are not my Waies equal*, ſaith the Lord? Sometimes from our neceſſity, John 3. 26. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.* Sometimes from the benefit and profit we ſhall have, if we do come in, Prov. 1. 23. *Turn ye at my reproof, and behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my Words unto you.* O bleſſed promiſe! one would think this ſhould break the heart of Devils; as if the Lord had ſaid, Well, though thou haſt been a great ſinner, and though thou haſt rebelled againſt me ever ſince thou waſt born; yet if thou wilt but turn at my reproof, or ſay to thy God, Turn us, and we ſhall be turned, (for I muſt do it) I will pour out my Spirit upon thee, I will give grace and glory, a Houſe, a City, a Kingdome, Life, and all things; The Lord

doth ſeem to out-bid all other comforts that we have in ſin; therefore he doth tell us of honey, milk, rayment, ſuch things as do moſt take with our hearts, that ſo he might gain us to come in, and be at one with him. Now I ſhall appeal to your conſciences, that have felt this in ſome meaſure; Doth not the Devil come with ſtrong arguments? The World with the like? And wicked men with ſtrong perſwaſions? The corruptions within you with ſtrong motives? And yet doth not the Lord out-bid them all, and ſo win the ſoul to himſelf?

Twelfthly, Conſider further, The Lord comes and anſwers all objections that lie in the hearts of ſinners.

Object. 1. Saith one, I am unworthy; I have nothing in me that good is.

Anſw. The Lord ſaith, Iſa. 55. *Come, and buy milk and Wine, without money, and without price*; three times it is ſpoken in one or two verſes. So that God doth ſet forth his Kingdom by milk, wine, and bread, things uſeful for the body; ſometimes by a marriage, ſometimes by a ſupper, wherein are all kinds of dainties; ſometimes he doth invite them to the ſupper, and to the marriage of his Son, and ſometimes doth compel them to come in. Then the Devil working with our corrupt nature, doth what he can to make the ſoul ſlight the Goſpel, and to look upon the blood

blood of the Covenant as a mean thing: When the ſoul doth begin indeed to apprehend the greatneſs and ſweetneſs of the Gopel of glad tydings, then ſteps in Sathan; What, ſuch a one as thou have ſuch mercy? Fellow ſinners, mark the policy of the ſubtil Devil; he doth at firſt labour to ſet at nought the Goſpel, accounting it as a mean thing: But when the Lord doth ſhine through that miſt, and ſhew the ſoul the excellency of his Son, and the glory of the Goſpel; then comes the Devil the other way, ſaying, with thee theſe be great things indeed; But thou art vile and baſe, both in thy principles and practice; and canſt thou think that God ever intended theſe things to thee? *What, to ſuch a one as thou art?* Then the Lord anſwereth for thee, *Come, without money, and without price*; as if he had ſaid, Though thou haſt no ability to do any thing; yet come, I will make thee rich enough; thou haſt no mony, (that is, no ſelf-righteouſneſs) let not that hinder, Revel. 22. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride ſay come, and let him that hears come, and let him that is a thirſt come, and Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

Object. It may be (ſaith the ſoul) though the Lord doth require nothing beforehand, yet when I am come, he will require hard things of me; I muſt live ſo ſtrictly, and abandon all my plea-

sures: What, shall I leave all those pleasant waies, and have nothing but according to the Word, and according to Conscience? Then farewell all the comfort and joy of all our life, if we come to this once.

Answ. I appeal to you, whether your hearts have not been kept off by such things as these. But now (O fellow-sinners) mark how Christ doth take off these Objections, Mat. 11. '*Come unto me, and I will give you Rest. Take my yoke upon you:* (and mark what follows:) *my yoke is easie, and my burden light.* As if Christ should say, I will lay no yoke upon you but what is easie; nor any burden but what is light. And this I affirm, Though this may seem to be hard to you at first, you will finde the waies of God more easie then ever you found the waies of sin. Do but ask them that have any experience of the love of God to them, and they will tell thee, that they have found more sweetness in one day in following God, then they found in the waies of sin many years: Prov. 3. 17. *Her waies are waies of pleasantness, and all her paths are peaceable paths.* Now, if you will believe the Spirit of God, you see there is more peace, more joy, more sweetness, more comfort then ever you had before.

13. Again consider, The Lord doth not only use strong Arguments, and answer all Objections,

ctions, but he is importunate too; as first, he doth cry out after sinners, Prov. 1. *Wisdom cryeth in the streets.* And so *Prov.* 9. and *Isa.* 54. he doth make proclamation, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come.* He doth importune, and bid come, over and over, again and again; *Come, come, come,* three times together. So that God doth seek more earnestly to sinners, then they do to him. It may be thou wilt seek to God once for a mercy thou wanteſt, and give over; but behold, God cals to thee again and again, *Come, come, come.*

14. If all this will not prevail with sinners to come in, yet the Lord leaves them not, but appeals to the very consciences of sinners, and deals with them that way. If you were in great distress concerning your estate, or life, and you go to a man that hath both wisdom and power to help you, and open the case to him, but cannot prevail; then you bring strong arguments; and they do not move; then you take away all objections, but yet prevail not; then you importune him, and urge your arguments again and again; and all this doth not prevail; then you appeal to his own conscience, whether you have not spoken right to him, saying, I will even leave this to your own conscience to judge of it; and this many times doth prevail, when nothing else will. Even thus (of all the world) doth God deal with sinners

ners, and appeal to their own conſcience, Iſa. 43. 26. *Put me in remembrance, let us pleaa together. Declare thou, that thou maiſt be juſtified.* As if the Lord had ſaid, if thou canſt declare any thing why thou doſt not come, that lyeth in thy way, I will remove it. and thou ſhalt be accepted. Jer. 2. 5. *Thus ſaith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* Verſe 31. *Have I been a barren Wilderneſs to Iſrael?* Ezek 18. 25. *Hear now, O houſe of Iſrael, are not my Wayes equal? are not your wayes unequal?* As if the Lord had ſaid. Do you think in your conſcience that theſe waies that you walk in are right? Is this equal, that ſinners ſhould go on their daies, and paſs their time in ſin, and when they can ſin no longer, then to plead for mercy? Is this equal? If this will not do, the Lord will ſay, Conſcience, let him alone: ſo conſcience may be quiet, but the Lord hath left pleading with him.

15. Again, the Lord hath many times broke forth into tears, to ſee the ſtubborneſs of mens hearts: *O Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, &c. If thou hadſt known in this thy day the things that make for thy peace.* Now, ſuppoſe that Chriſt ſhould come and weep over a company of poor ſinners, as he did over *Jeruſalem*, ſaying, O thou ſinful ſoul, hadſt thou known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace;

peace: and suppose thou shouldest see one tear trickling down after another, and he should say, Oh that this people did but know the things that belong unto their peace! if thou hadst a heart of stone, it could not but melt.

16. The Lord doth foresee what a little honour he shall have of this sinner, when he hath brought him home: he seeth still, that thou wilt have abundance of corruption in thy heart, and that thou wilt grieve his holy Spirit, and walk very offensively, dishonour the way of Religion, and open the mouths of the enemies, as *David*: I say, God doth foresee, that after he hath taken all this pains to bring thee unto himself, what a little honour he shall have by thee; and yet he doth perswade thee to come: This also doth note his willingness to save thee.

Lastly, consider, that after the Lord, our tender Father, hath used all these means, and many more to bring in sinners, yet he is contented to wait a long time upon sinners, and to take advantages to win them, Isa. 30. 18. *The Lord doth Wait, that he may be gracious unto you.* O how many years hath the Lord waited upon me, and thee, and other sinners! How long hath he knocked, and yet we let him stand at the door! *O Jerusalem, Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?* Isaiah 51. 17, 18. *I smote him, and he went on frowardly; but I have seen his waies,*

and

and will heal him, and restore comfort to him, and to his mourners. Though he went on frowardly, I will restore comfort to him.

Now, put all this together, and see how infinitely willing God is to save thee, O thou drooping sinner.

Quest. If any should ask a reason, why God is so importunate, and desirous to draw up sinners to himself?

Answ. 1. The ground of the love is in himself, and I can give no reason of it, but the same that he hath left upon record, Exod. 33. 19. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

2. He doth this, because mercy pleaseth him, Mic. 7. 18. *I will pardon, because mercy pleaseth me, saith the Lord.* Now then, that that doth please a man he is ever desirous after; The Scripture saith, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, but he sheweth mercy willingly, because he delighteth in it.*

3. The blood of Christ, his onely Son, doth cry aloud in the ears of the Lord for mercy; and that obedience of Christ, wherewith the Lord is satisfied, is so well pleasing to him, that whatsoever this blood doth plead for, God must needs grant. Now, the blood of Christ crieth mercy, mercy, Lord, for sinners; the blood of *Abel* cryed vengeance, vengeance; but the blood of Christ

Christ speaketh better things, and cryeth pardon, pardon. Nothing in the world can stop the current of Gods mercy to a people, when it doth come to the blood of Christ: Then saith the Father of mercies, open all the flood gates now, and let mercy be shewed in the highest degree, seeing the blood of my Son cryeth for this: Though this be wonderfull mercy, to pardon such a great sinner, there is not a drop only, but a Sea of mercy, to cleanse thee throughly. *Come*, saith the Lord, *let us reason together; though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow*, Isa. 1.18. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own name sake, and will not remember thy sins*, Isa. 43. 25. *Put me in remembrance, saith the Lord, put me in remembrance of this my promise, and let us plead together, saith the Lord. Declare these words with thy mouth, that I have put into thy heart, that thou maist be justified*, Isa. 43. 26.

O thou troubled sinner (for to thee I speak) I mean thee, to whom sin is a burden; see how our tender Father hath dealt with our brother Prodigal, Luke 15. 28. *He arose and came to his Father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

1. Take notice, his Father sees him, before he sees

ſees his Father. No ſooner doth a ſinner think of looking toward heaven, but the Lord ſpies him, and pities him.

2. He ſaw him whiles he was yet a great way off, he was but in the beginning of his way to come; his Father might have let him alone till he had been come quite home to his houſe, and it had been ſingular mercy to have bidden him welcome then; but it is done whiles he is a great way off. So, thou art at a great diſtance from the mercy of God in thy apprehenſion; that is, thou canſt not believe, nor ſcarce hope in his mercy; yet he will draw nigh to thee.

3. The Scripture ſaith, his father had compaſſion on him. I ſee the Lords bowels yearn, work, and ſtir within him at the ſight of his Son, Jer. 3. 20. *Therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord* Jer. 9. 24. *I delight in loving kindneſs.* Mic. 7. 18. *He pardoneth, becauſe mercy pleaſeth him.*

4. It is ſaid, that his Father *ran.* How rich, abundant mercy had it been in his father, though he had ſtood ſtill till his Son had come to him! *But what mercy is this!* He will go towards him, and give him a meeting. *O mercy!* that his father ran not from him; but what mercy call you this, that he runs to him! Why, would it not have ſerved (if he would needs go meet him) to have walked towards him with a ſoft and grave

grave pace? No,no,that will not ſerve the Lords turn; if a Sinner will but go towards the Lord, mercy will not go a foot-pace, but runs to meet him; yea, mercy draws him, and puts him upon coming at firſt ſtep. The ſons pace is,he aroſe and came; he came walking towards his father. This is the fathers pace, he *ran*; the ſon moſt needed to have run; his belly was pinched with hunger, yet he only walks, but his father runs: bowels full of mercy, out pace bowels pinched with hunger.

5. I ſee him falling upon his neck, that is, he hugged, and embraced him; how? fall on his neck? Who would not have been loath to have touched him? yea, to come near him? Is he not in his loathſome ſtinking rags? Smels he not of the Swine he kept? Could a man come near him without ſtopping his Noſe? Would not a man be ready to caſt up his ſtomack upon ſuch an embracement? Mercy is not nice and dainty. Will God thus embrace a Prodigal in his loathſome rags? Oh ſinner, be encouraged to draw near to God; for the worſt of all wickedneſs and baſeneſs in the world cannot make him reject thee, *Ezek* 16. 4,5,6.

6. But yet behold a greater wonder then all the reſt; I ſee him *kiſſing his Son.* Who could have brooked to have embraced a perſon in ſo filthy a pickle? much leſs would any one kiſs ſuch

ſuch a one: What, kiſs thoſe lips that had been ſo lately a lapping in the hogs-trough? thoſe lips that had ſo often kiſs'd thoſe baſe and beggarly harlots? Kiſs him! A man would rather have thought he would have kick'd him; and yet his Father kiſſeth him. There is a paſſage somewhat like this, Gen 33. 4. *And Eſau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him.* A ſtrange and wonderfull thing, that he that had threatned to kill him, and came now upon that errand, to kill him and all his, that his heart ſhould be ſo ſtrangely altered by God, that killing ſhould be turned into kiſſing. It was very ſtrange that *Eſau* ſhould kiſs *Jacob*; but it is more ſtrange here, that this Father ſhould kiſs this Prodigal.

Read and conſider well theſe Scriptures.

John 1. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſins of the world.*

Luk. 2. 10, 11. *Behold, I bring you good tydings of great joy, that ſhall be to all people:* That is, *that unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord.*

John 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* to this end, *that all that believe in him ſhould not periſh, but have life everlaſting.*

John 3. 17. *God ſent not his Son into the*

World

World to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be ſaved.

1 Tim. 1.15. *This is a true ſaying, that Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief.*

Heb. 13. 12. *Jeſus, that he might ſanctifie the people with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate.*

1 John 2. 1, 2. *If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins, and not for ours only, but for the ſins of the whole world.*

Rev. 5. 8. *Thou waſt killed, and haſt redeemed us to God, out of every kindred, tongue, and people.*

Pſal. 145. 10. *He will fulfil the deſires of them that fear him.*

Zech. 13. 1. *The Lord hath opened a fountain for ſin, and for uncleanneſs.*

Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come then.*

Mat. 5. 6. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt; for they ſhall be filled.*

John 7. 37, 38. *If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.*

John 6. 37. *And he that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt off.* Oh mark; *I will in no wiſe caſt him off.* That is, there is no corruption

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in thee, nor all thy enemies without thee, that ſhall ſo far prevail with me, as that I ſhall forſake thee.

Oh then come unto me, come unto me, *All you that are heavy laden, and I will undoubtedly give you reſt.*

1. Conſider, He that hath made theſe promiſes, is able to make them good.

2. He is not only able to do it, but he is willing to do it; he delights in it.

3. He is not only able and willing, but he is faithfull too in keeping promiſe; inſomuch that not one tittle ſhall fail of all that he hath promiſed: He never ſaith, *Seek ye me in vain.*

1. Take notice, the Lord keeps open houſe, Rev. 22 17. *Let him that will, come and take of the Water of life freely.*

2. Becauſe of our backwardneſs to come, he invites, Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come.*

3. He anſwereth objections, and taketh away all excuſes, in theſe words, *Come without money, and without price*; though thou haſt not righteouſneſs to commend thee to me, yet come, *without money, and without price.*

4. He aſſures thee, thou ſhalt be welcome. Joh. 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt off.*

5. He tels thee, that if thou come, thou ſhalt not

nor loſe thy labour; *He will give thee reſt*, Matth. 11. 28.

He will give thee reſt from thine own righteouſneſs, that thou ſhalt ſee thy acceptance in the righteouſneſs of another, and ſo ceaſe from thine own. He will give thee reſt, that is, he will ſtill thoſe troubles that ariſe in thine heart, and take off thoſe vails from thine eyes, and the bondage that lay upon thy heart, and ſhew thee that he hath ſet thee free from hell, death, law, ſin paſt, preſent, and to come; and ſo gives thee Faith, which *is the evidence of things not ſeen*, which will evidence this to thy ſoul. Thy ſoul no ſooner apprehends this, but preſently it will be ready to break forth in theſe words of *Mary*, Luke 1. 46, 47, 48. *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord, my ſpirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour; for He hath regarded the low eſtate of his handmaid*, &c.

And now to draw to a concluſion: for (as I ſaid in the beginning) I have but *A Word* to the World: 1. He gives free liberty to come. 2. He invites thee. 3. He will bid thee welcome. 4. He will eaſe thee of all thy troubles.

Object. But thou wilt ſay, Here are indeed ſweet rules, and bleſſed promiſes amongſt theſe things that you have laid down; but I have no ability to walk in the one, nor heart to embrace or believe the other: and I finde it written,

Jer. 10. 23. *The way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Answ. But consider, he requires nothing of thee, but what he hath promised he will enable thee to do. For instance, *Isaiah* 1. 16. he requires thee, and saith, *Wash thee, and make thee clean; put away the evil of thy doings; cease to do evil, learn to do well.* Here is his precept, and thy duty. Now turn from this precept, to that promise, Jer. 33 8. *I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me.* Now when thou goest about that duty required, and findest thy self unable, then look to that same promise; and in the apprehension thereof, thy soul shall look up, and go about the work in the strength (not of thy self, but) of the mighty God of grace, who hath spoken, and will do it for thee. So for Repentance; he commands thee to repent, *Acts* 17. 30. Thou goest about it, but findest the work of Repentance (true and unfeigned) too hard for thee to perform; then turn from this Precept, to that Promise, *Acts* 5. 31. And when thou there seest, that he that hath commanded thee to repent, even the God of power and truth, and that cannot lie, hath engaged himself to enable thee to the performance thereof, wilt thou not be encouraged?

Again, he commands thee, *not to let sin reign*

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in thee, Rom. 6.12. And is not the promise nigh thee, (vers 14.) *that it shall not reign in thee*?

Object. Thou wilt say. These promises indeed are made to the Elect, and to Saints.

Answ. Let that be granted; yet art thou excluded? Canst thou say thou art not elected? How wilt thou prove it? Wilt thou dive into the secret counsel of God? it is too deep for thee to fathom. Dost thou complain that thy wicked life doth evidence it? Well, consider then, Hast thou denyed Christ? So did *Peter*. Hast thou persecuted Christ? Did not *Paul* so? And yet for all this, were not they elected? In a word, there is not a man, or woman, under the whole heavens, can justly or truly say, He or she is not elected. Of this, many reasons and testimonies might be given; but I would not be tedious.

He commands thee to love him with all thy heart, with all thy strength, and with all thy soul, *Deut.* 10.12. and *Deut.* 30.6. the Lord comes in with his promise, saying, *I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou maist live.* He commands (Col. 3.5.) *to mortifie thy earthly members which are upon the earth, &c.* And (*Mic.* 7.19.) he undertakes the work: *He will subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depth of the Sea.*

2 Cor. 15.2. The Lord saith by *Paul*, *Thou must*

keep in memory what is preached unto thee. But *thou* wilt say (as moſt do) thou canſt not remember: Then have recourſe to that Promiſe, *Joh.* 14.14, 26. There the Lord undertakes and promiſeth to thee, ſaying, *He will teach thee all things, and bring all things to thy remembrance, whatſoever he hath ſaid unto thee.* So *David* (Pſal. 25.5.) intreats the Lord to teach and inſtruct him in his way. And in *Pſal.* 25.12. the Lord undertakes the Work. And *Pſal.* 32.8. the Lord ſaith to him, *I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou ſhalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* And ſo for all things whatſoever the Lord thy God requireth of thee in any Scripture: in the ſame or another Scripture he comes in with his ſweet and bleſſed promiſes of Aſſiſtance, to enable thee unto it. He knows right well as ſaith *Jeremiah* (Chap. 10.23.) *The way of man is not in himſelf. It is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps.* In a word, Conſider, There be many of the greateſt Promiſes amidſt the greateſt Precepts. So *Deut.* 10. 20. he commands thee to fear him. And *Jer.* 32.39. he comes with a ſweet Promiſe, ſaying, *I will give thee an heart to fear me.* And in another Scripture, *I will put my Fear into your hearts.* Truly, Friend, the Conſideration of this will ſweeten all the Commands of the Lord unto thee, and it will cauſe thee to ſet about what is required in the ſtrength

ſtrength (not of thy ſelf, but) of the Lord: Then go on, and be ſtrong in him, and in the power of his might. Now to draw to a concluſion, conſider theſe particulars.

Firſt, that if after all theſe ſweet encouragements, invitations, intreatings, perſwaſions, beſeechings, thou continue ſtill in unbelife, and wilt not come to him, that thou maiſt have life, although he doth proteſt, that him that doth come to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out, *Joh. 6.* 37. it is the greateſt of thy ſins; and it may be thou ſhalt hear the Lords voice changed, and telling thee, *The ax is laid to the root of the tree, and he that brings not forth good fruit, ſhall be hewen down, and caſt into the fire.* Or ſuppoſe thou ſhouldſt hear him ſaying to thee, as once he was to *Jeruſalem*, Mat. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens, but ye would not! Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate.* Prov. 1. 24,25. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded;* ver. 26. *I alſo will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.* Read and well conſider that in *Heb.* 12.16,17. *Eſau* having ſlighted and undervalued his Birthright, would afterwards have repented, but could not, though he ſought it with tears. Therefore, *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Secondly, Conſider, the day is at hand, in which, all the Nations of the World; all the Tribes, Kinreds, and Tongues under the Heavens, that now are, ever were, or ſhall be; I ſay all, both ſmall and great, ſhall be gathered together before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt, *Mat.* 25.32, 33, 24. &c. Yea, the Sea ſhall give up her dead, and the grave ſhall give up her dead; death and hell ſhall give up their dead, *Rev.* 20. 12, 13, 14. In another place, we read, That we ſhall all appear before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt, and all that ever thou haſt done, good or evil, ſhall be laid open before all the world; all thy ſins, ſecret and open, ſhall be brought to light, and thou ſhalt be judged according to thy works, *Mat.* 25. 32, 33, 34, 35. *Rev.* 20. 12, 13. Then, when the ſecrets of all hearts are laid open, if thou art found to be a believer in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that thou haſt made him thy confidence, then thou ſhalt, in that terrible day ſtand up with boldneſs, 1 *Joh.* 4.17. And thy Judge, (which is thy Saviour) ſhall ſay to thee, as in *Mat.* 25.34. *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherite ye the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Then ſhall all tears be wiped from thine eyes, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flie away; there ſhall be eaſe without pain; beauty without blemiſh; credit without diſgrace: In a word, thy priviledges and enjoyments, ſhall be

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ſo great, as the heart of man cannot conceive, much leſs his tongue report: for thou ſhalt be like him, 1 *Joh* 3. 2.

But if thy name be not written in the Lambs book; if thou continueſt ſtill in unbelief, and endeſt thy dayes with an evil life: Oh what a terrible day will this be unto thee! 2 *Pet.* 3. 12. The Heavens ſhall be on fire and diſſolve, the earth alſo it ſhall melt with fervent heat: Then if the rocks and mountains might fall on thee, thou wouldſt think it a favour, to hide thee from the face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; *For the great day of his wrath is come, and Who ſhall abide it?* Rev. 6. 16, 17, &c. Then ſhalt thou hear that dreadful ſentence paſs on thee, Mat. 25 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Conſider a little this doleful ſentence.

1. Thou muſt depart from the preſence of the Lord.

2. Thou departeſt (not bleſſed, but) a curſed wretch. *Depart from me ye curſed.*

3. Not onely into fire, but into everlaſting fire; no hope of returning.

4. The companions that thou ſhalt have there, are the Devil and his Angels, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And this dreadful

day will come *as a thief in the night*, 2 Pet. 3. 10. *in which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the element ſhall melt with fervent heat; and the earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up*, &c. *Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved* (ver. 11.) *What manner of perſons ought you to be, in all holy converſation, and godlineſs?* Oh then take heed; Watch and pray: for you know not how neer the time is. Mar. 13. 33. *The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night*, 1 Theſ. 5. 2. *Wherefore (beloved) ſeeing that you look for ſuch things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.* 2 Pet. 3. 14.

Thirdly, conſider, if it ſhould be a few months, or yeers, before this great and terrible day come; yet it may not, for ought that thou knoweſt, be many days, no not ſo much as many hours or minutes before thy particular end come, in which thou ſhalt be gaſping for life, and breathing out thy laſt breath. If then thou look up, God will appear as an angry Judge; If thou look down, the bottomleſs pit will ſtrike terror into thee; on thy right hand, thy ſins ſtand accuſing thee; on thy left hand, the devil is ready to execute Gods eternal ſentence upon thee; within thee, thy conſcience gnawing; without thee, thy friends bewailing. So that look which way

way thou wilt; above thee, beneath thee, within thee, without thee, every object will adde to thy misery. Therefore, Oh *remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before these evil days come,* Eccl. 12. 1. Intreat the Lord, as *David* did, Psal. 39 4. *Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am.* And wilt thou know how frail thou art, O vain man? Then consider,

One Scripture saith of thy days, *It is as Water spilt upon the ground,* 2 Samuel 14. 14. Another Scripture saith, *Our days are like a shadow,* Psalm 102. 11. And, as if that were too long, *Job* saith (Job 7. 7.) *My life is but a Winde.* Psalm 102. 2. *Our days consume like smoke. We all do fade as a leaf,* Isaiah 64. 6. *All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away,* 1 Pet. 1. 24. And as if all these resemblances signified too much length, to hold forth the shortness of our life, the holy Ghost doth contract it shorter, Psalm 39. 5. *Thou hast made my days as an hands bredth.* And as if that resemblance also were too long, he saith in the same verse, *Mine age is as nothing.* Well then, doth the Scripture in many places say, *We are like a bubble of the brook, a tale that is told, or a dream?* O how should the serious consideration

tion hereof, teach thee *ſo to number thy days, that thou mighteſt apply thine heart to true and perfect wiſdom.* Or, as the Wiſe man ſaith, Eccl. 12.6. *Remember thy Creator before the ſilver cord be looſed, or the golden bowl be broken:* for as Death leaves thee, ſo Judgement will finde thee, *&c.* In a word, it is a point of high wiſdom, to be often thinking and meditating of our later end; for the Lord himſelf ſaith, Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, to conſider their later end!* So he that made thee, teach and perfect thee.

Two Words to thoſe choſen out of the WORLD.

NOw I ſhall come to ſpeak two Words to thoſe that are choſen out of the world.

Firſt, Generally, to all the Saints.

Secondly, More particularly, to the Saints under thoſe Titles or Forms by which they are moſt commonly known.

1. The Word in general, to all that are truly godly, (for now to you I ſpeak) even to you, my fellow-members, and brethren in Chriſt; *Awake, awake, put on thy ſtrength O Sion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem, thou holy Citie,*

tie, Isa. 52.1. *Arise my beloved and come away*, Cant. 2.10, 12. *For the day is dawning, and the day-star arising in your hearts*, 2 Pet. 1.19.

O Saints! consider a little upon what ground you stand, upon what foundation you are built. Dost thou believe there was such a Christ as the Scriptures mention? Dost thou believe that this Christ took thy Nature. and also thy Sins? Dost thou believe, that in this thy nature he fulfilled the Law, took it away, nailed it to the Cross, and so is become *the end of the Law to all that believe*? Also, freed thee from sin past, present, and to come, and so from death, the wages thereof? Dost thou conceive, that God will make good his gracious promises? in particular these, *Isa.* 25. 7, 8. *&c. He will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all Nations; He will swallow up death in victory. And the Lord God will wipe away all tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away, from off all the earth.* Dost thou believe that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters the sea; and that we shall all know him, from the greatest to the least? *Jer.* 31.34. Dost thou believe those words which the Lord spake to *Daniel*, Chap. 7. 27. *And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the Whole heavens*, (mark this

this word, *under the whole heavens*) *ſhall be given to the people of the Saints; for their Kingdome is an everlaſting Kingdome, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey them.* Doſt thou believe thoſe words, Iſaiah 30. 26. *Moreover the light of the Moon ſhall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun ſhall be ſevenfold?* Doſt thou believe, *That the Lord will wipe away all tears from off all faces, and that there ſhall be no more ſorow nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pains?* Revel. 21. 4. Doſt thou believe what the Lord ſaith in Iſaiah 5. 10. *And the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to SION with Songs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads; they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs; and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flie away.* Doſt thou believe the Lord will heal all our back-ſlidings, all our diſtractions, and compoſe all our differences, and give all his people one heart, and one way? *Jeremiah* 32. 39. Read underſtandingly that, Iſaiah 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. *The Woolf alſo ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lie down with the Kid, and the Calf and the young Lion, and the fatling together; and the Cow and the Bear ſhall feed their young, and lie down together. And the Lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the Oxe, and the ſucking childe ſhall play on the hole of the Aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the Cockatrice*

trice den: They shall not hurt nor destroy in all mine holy mountain: for the Earth shall be full of the knowledg of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea. Light is sowen for the Righteous; and gladness for the upright in heart. Isa.7.9,11,12. Therefore rejoyce in the Lord ye Righteous and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. These (and many Scriptures more which for brevity I omitt) do shew thee O most noble overcoming Saint, that glorious times are coming: wherefore *gird up the loyns of thy mind, be sober, and hope to the end*, for the grace that is to be brought unto thee at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 *Pet.*1.13. And when he is revealed, amongst many mercies which thou shalt receive, I will only mention two.

First, He shall appear without sin, and thou shalt appear so in him. *Heb. 9.ult.*

Secondly, Thou shalt be *like him:* for thou shalt *see him as he is* .1. John 3.2. &c. Then when thy soul apprehends this, it will even break forth into Praises and Songs of Deliverance, as once *David.* God let in a light, whereby he saw his sins pardoned, Psal. 103. 1,2, 3, 4. *Bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name; Bless the Lord O my Soul and forget not all his Benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases: Who redeemeth thy life from Death: Who crowneth*

eth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. If thou ask why I cite so many Scriptures, and not explain them, I answer, Remember to whom I speak, that is, to the chosen generation, to the Saints enlightned, and they have the sum of them opened to them already, or at least they have the Spirit of God in them, which is the truest Key to unfold or unlock the mystery of them unto them.

Object. 2. But I suppose that many of these forementioned promises were made unto particular Saints, as to the Jews, or the like and so have been fulfilled to them; and if so, then what matter of comfort can they administer unto me?

Answ. Suppose it were so, that they be fulfilled already; (which I know most do say) yet in some measure (through Gods goodness) I do know the contrary; they are wholly, or for the greatest part yet to be fulfilled, as I could prove by Scripture; but I forbear, because I would not be tedious. But suppose they were made to some particular Saints, and fulfilled to them; yet they are in whole, or in part, applyable unto thee; as to instance in one Scripture for all, *Josh.* 1. 5. The Lord promiseth *Joshua, That he would never leave him, nor forsake him.* And the Apostle in *Hebrews* 13. 5. presseth the Saints to make use of, and to lay hold on that promise, as made to them, though it was made to *Joshua* many hundred years before.

Object.

Object. 3. If they be yet to be fulfilled, it is a great question whether I shall live to see any of them fulfilled; and then what comfort do they hold forth to me?

Answ. If thou dost not live to see them fulfilled with thy bodily eyes, yet with the eye of faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, *(with natural eyes)* Heb. 11. 1. thou maist see them fulfilled to thee: as the Saints, Heb. 11. 13. *They all dyed in the Faith, not having received the Promises; but having seen them afar off*, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them; that is, they lived in the enjoyment of them, in the Spirit. Again, 1 *Thes.* 4. 16, 17. there are promises made; one, *That the dead in Christ shall rise first*; and another, *That we shall ever be with the Lord.* And in the 18. verse, he commands the Saints, *That they should comfort one another with these words.* Then (in one word) this is the summe to be learned from hence; that we should not only rejoyce in the present enjoyments, but live in a full expectation of (and comfort in) what we shall shortly enjoy; *And comfort one another with these words.*

Is not that time drawing near, which is prophesied of, Revel. 11. 15. *And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his*

his Son Christ, and he shall reign for evermore. Wherefore, most noble overcoming Saints, Servants of the most high and mighty God, look for great alterations, and mighty changes; See what desolations God will make in the earth; when he hath accomplished his work upon mount Sion, then he will judge the mountain of *Esau*; that is, when God hath fully brought up his people to enjoy nothing but himself, then he will declare himself to be a God taking vengeance on his, and our enemies. Wherefore rejoyce, O you Saints, for the time of your singing is come. The day of our redemption is appearing. Howl, O *Babylon*; Mourn, O thou proud opposer of Christ: thy pride is falling, thy end is coming; Who will mourn for thee? Then shall all thy lovers stand afar off, for fear of thy torments; they stand far off, they will not come neer to comfort thee. Be silent then, O all flesh; for the Lord is risen out of his holy habitation. Then wilt thou break forth, as in *Isa.*25.9. And it shall be said in that day, *This is our God, we have waited for him; This is our Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoyce in his salvation.* Then by this glorious appearing, he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all Nations, and he will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all

faces,

faces, and the rebuke of his people ſhall be taken away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath ſpoken it, *Iſaiah* 25. 7, 8. O Saints, *lift up your heads*; *your redemption draws nigh*: and now will our God make good to us that which is written, Zepheniah 3. 9. *I will turn the people of pure language, and they ſhall ſerve me with one conſent.* This *pure language*, is the language of the Spirit.

It is appointed by God, to put an end to theſe diviſions: not till then ſhall the envy of *Ephraim* depart, and the enemies of *Judah* be cut off; *Ephraim* not envy *Judah*, nor *Judah* vex *Ephraim*. Then the Kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatneſs of the Kingdom ſhall be given to the Kingdom of the Saints; whoſe Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom; and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey them, *Dan.* 7. 27. Then *the Nations that will not ſerve thee*, (that is, Chriſt in the Saints) *ſhall periſh*, Iſaiah 60. 12. Now, God having given you all one heart, and one way, as it is written, *Jer.* 32. 29. now ſhall be brought to paſs that ſaying, Iſaiah 11. 6, 7, 8. *The Woolf ſhall dwel with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lie down with the Kid, &c.* Verſe 9. *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea. The envy of Ephraim ſhall depart, and the adver-*

ſaries of Judah ſhall be cut off; Then all you, the Iſrael of God, ſhall have your fathers Law written in your hearts. Then you ſhall ceaſe teaching one another, ſaying, know the Lord; for they ſhall all of them know me; from the leaſt to the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord, Jer. 31. 34.

My dear friends. I have much more to write unto you of theſe things; but being more ſtraitned in time, then in love, at preſent I ſhall paſs by many things; Firſt, concerning the reſtitution of all things, ſpoken of *Rom.* 8. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. and *Acts* 3. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And ſo in many other Scriptures, which for preſent I omit; and then, what ſhall follow upon the reſtitution of all things, *Rev.* 11. 15. *Rev.* 21. 2, 3, 4. Theſe things were in my heart to write of diſtinctly, ſeeing that all, as well Saints as ſinners, are extreamly ignorant of theſe things, though moſt clearly held forth in Scripture, that a man can hardly ſpeak of them, though he ſpeaks no more then the Hiſtory holds forth, but one is offended, and another is troubled; therefore at preſent I am ſilent therein; As our Lord ſaid, I have more things to ſpeak, but ye cannot bear them now; and this Scripture likewiſe, *Haſt thou faith? have it to thy ſelf, &c.* So I paſs by that which thou ſhalt ſhortly enjoy, and come to ſpeak a few words of what many of the Saints do already enjoy; and oh that all the Saints did but truly conſider theſe

enſuing

enſuing things, which I never received of man, neither was I taught them by man, but of God alone!

Thou art a believer, conſider:

1. The Law that thou haſt broken, Chriſt hath kept, fulfilled, and taken away.

2. Thy ſins which were many, both original and actual, of omiſſion and commiſſion, thy ſins paſt, thoſe preſent, and thoſe to come, are all laid upon Chriſt, and the wages due to them he received.

3. Conſider upon what account thou now ſtandeſt before the Father, not of thine own righteouſneſs but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

4. Conſider, That thou being made free from ſin, doſt reckon thy ſelf ſo, Rom. 6. 11. *Likewiſe reckon your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God.*

5. When thou art thus built upon Chriſt, and thus grounded in him, *Epheſ.* 3. 18, 19. Then thou ſhalt be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the heighth, and depth, bredth, and length of his love, and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge.

Now follows the fruit of this knowledge: The ſoul that is elightned will not go on in ſin, but the love of Chriſt will conſtrain him from a courſe of ſin. I ſhall ſpeak a word to every one of theſe particulars, briefly and plainly.

1. Of the firſt. The Law that thou haſt broken, Chriſt hath kept, fullfilled, and taken away. The Law required obedience of thee; Chriſt comes and yields obedience for thee, and imputes it to thee, Rom.5.19. *As by the diſobedience of one, many are made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous*; the Law required the keeping of every tittle of the firſt and ſecond Table; Chriſt comes and walks up to it ſtep by ſtep; So that the Law could no ſooner require obedience, but preſently Chriſt yields obedience, as it was in the Old Teſtament propheſied, and in the New teſtified of him. The Law required an holy life, Chriſt lived an holy life; the Law required perfect obedience, as well in the principles as in the practice; Chriſt yields it in both; the Law requires death for the leaſt diſobedience; and though Chriſt had not broken in it any tittle, yet he repreſenting the perſons of thoſe that had broken it, became obedient unto the Law in this alſo, Phil.2.8. *And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs*; and that the Law is done away by Chriſt, ſee 2 *Cor.*3. four times in that chapter it is ſaid to be done away. Alſo *Rom.*7. *Rom.*10.4. And ſo the 2. 3. 4. Chap. to the *Galatians*, and many other Scriptures.

2. Conſider, Thy ſins which are many, both ori-

original and actual, of omission of commission, against the first Table or the second, thy sins past, present, and to come, are all laid upon Christ, and the wages due to them he received, Isaiah 53. 6. *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* 1 Pet. 2 24. *Who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, &c.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Mat. 8. 17. *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*

3. Consider, Upon what account you stand before the Father, *viz.* not of your own righteousness, but upon the account of the righteousness of Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 1. 30. *He is made unto us wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption*, Phil. 3. 9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by Faith.*

4. Consider, If the Law be fulfilled, thy sins pardoned, and thou now standest before thy Father by the righteousness of another; Then thou canst not but look upon thy self as free from sin, and so break forth, as in Rom. 6. 11. *Likewise, reckon your selves dead unto sin indeed, but alive unto God. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*, Romans 6. 18. *But now being made free from sin,*

and become ſervants to God, you have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life, Rom. 6. 22. Col. 1. 22. *He hath reconciled you in the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his ſight*, 1 Theſſ. 3. 13. Now one that is, 1. Holy, 2. Unblamable, 3. Unreprovable, muſt needs be free from ſin.

5. When thou art thus rooted and grounded in love, thou ſhalt *be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the bredth, and length, and height, and depth:* and to know *the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge*, Epheſ. 3. 18. So ſhalt thou *be filled with all the fulneſs of God*, verſe 19. Methinks I ſee many of the Saints even breaking forth in the language of *Mary*, Luke 1. 46, 47. 48. *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord, my ſpirit doth rejoyce in God my Saviour: (* and then gives occaſion of this joy: *) for he hath regarded the low eſtate of his handmaid.* The tongue of the dumb doth begin to ſing, the eyes of the blinde to be opened, and the ears of the deaf to hear. Read the 35. of *Iſaiah*; that whole Chapter briefly and plainly lays down, by way of propheſie, that he, our tender Father, is bringing down the mighty from their ſeat, and exalting them of low degree; yea, he rebuketh Kings for your ſakes. Your God is no reſpecter of perſons; If Kings and Princes rebel againſt him,

him, and his choſen ones, he will bring down their heads as low as the Block. And if theſe great ones endeavor to ſeparate God and his people, God will ſeparate their heads from their bodies. You ſee theſe Days of Ours do witneſs to this. In a word, he is pulling down the kingdoms of men, and ſetting up the Kingdom of his dear Son. And how doth the brutiſh Malignant rage, and the poor blind Presbyterian murmur at the going on of God's work! Let me ſay to both, as Prov. 1. 22. *How long ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity* ! What, do you not know that God hath an Attribute of Juſtice; that he will magnifie, as well as that of his Mercy? If he afflict his own dear Children, whom he ſo loves, will he not execute Vengeance on his Adverſaries? Be ſilent then, all Fleſh, before him: For the Lord will bring to paſs his Work, yea, his ſtrange Work: truly, Juſtice hath no reſpect of perſons: wherefore turn your murmuring and repining, into rejoycing and thankſgiving, for the judgements of God upon the enemies of his truth. O you moſt noble overcoming Saints, ſervants of the moſt high God, you ſhall judge Angels, as well as earthly Kings: your Father loves you, and therefore he will honour you: (nay he doth honour thee already) *Thoſe that honour me, I will honour*, ſaith the Lord.

1. He calls thee his ſervant; and that is a great honour to be a ſervant to ſo heavenly a Prince. But, as if that were too little,

2. He calls you his choſen ones, his friends, *Joh.*15. 15.

3. He calls you his Brethren and Siſters, *Heb.* 2.11.

4. He calls you his Sons and Daughters, a more neer relation. Yet, as if that were a ſtile too low to expreſs his tender love unto you,

5. He calls you his Spouſe, and Wife, *Rev.* 21.9.

6. He calls you Members of his own Body, 1 *Cor.* 12.12.

7. He tells you, you are Co-heirs with himſelf, *Rom.* 8. 17.

8. He tells you that the glory that the Father gave to him, he hath given to you; that you may be one, as the Father and he are one.

9. He tells you, that you are not onely one in the Body, but one in the Spirit alſo, 1 *Cor.*6.17.

10. And laſtly, he tells you, that this is but a ſhort taſte of what you ſhall be, 1 *Joh.*3.1,2.

How will the conſideration of theſe neer Relations cauſe you to break forth with the holy Ghoſt? 1 Joh.4.17. *As he is, ſo are we in this preſent World.* Or, as in *Heb.*2.11. *Both he that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified, are all one.* Again, hence it is that the Lord ſaith,

He

He that toucheth them, touchoth the apple of mine eye. In a word, the Lord takes all the wrongs done to any of his, as done to himſelf. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.*

Again, conſider, as thy moſt wiſe God turns all things to his own glory, ſo likewiſe he turns them to thy good. To inſtance in a few things; as firſt, The very fall of *Adam*, wherein the devil thought to have wrought thy ruine, God in his wiſdom hath turned it to thy greateſt good. And in the ſame thing wherein the devil thought to caſt thee, thy God appointed to recover thee. *Adam* fell through unbelief; thou riſeſt again by faith: and the ſtate in which thou ſtandeſt in the ſecond *Adam*, is a more firm and glorious ſtate then that of the firſt *Adam*. So that thou haſt gotten many priviledges by his fall. For inſtance:

1. *Adam*, though made without ſin, might ſin. Now it is impoſſible for thee, as thou art made a new creature by Chriſt, to ſin, 1 *Joh.* 3. 6, 9.

2. The firſt *Adam* was made inferiour to Angels; but the ſecond *Adam* hath made thee equal with (if not above) the Angels, *Luke* 22. 36. *Matth.* 22. 30.

3. The

3. The firſt *Adam* had power over viſible creatures of the earth; but thou (being reſtored by the ſecond *Adam*) haſt power over principalities, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places, *Epheſ.* 6. 12. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4.

4. *Adam* was made righteous, and that was a glorious ſtate; but the ſecond *Adam* hath made thee *the righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. ver. 21.

The firſt *Adam* in his beſt eſtate, was ſubject to fall by the temptation of evil Angels; but nothing can make a ſeparation between thee and thy God, *Rom.* 8. 35.

6. *Adam* had but a temporal paradiſe at the beſt, but the ſons of *Sion*, by vertue of their ſecond *Adam*, have a ſpiritual Paradiſe, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23.

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! *How unſearchable are his judgements! and his wayes paſt finding out!* Well doth *John* ſay, John 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life.* Mark, he doth not ſay, he *ſhall* have everlaſting life; but he *hath* it already. And particularly, he hath it thus;

1. He hath everlaſting life in the *Promiſe*; *Fear not little flock, it is your fathers good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.*

2. He hath it in the firſt fruits; for what is heaven, but a more full enjoyment hereafter of what is begun here?

3. He

3. He hath it, *even now*, in poſſeſſion, by Chriſt his head; for Chriſt his head is entered in already. Oh then, you ſervants of God, If you be entered into heaven, if you have received a kingdom that cannot be moved, *Serve God acceptably, With reverence and godly fear.*

So having ſpoken a word in general, to all the Sons of *Sion*; give me leave to ſpeak a word in particular to each of them, under their ſeveral Forms; and herein I ſhall ſomewhat differ from the practice of moſt men.

I ſhall firſt take notice of thoſe things that are commendable in the Saints, to whom I write, to cheriſh and commend that. And,

Secondly, Reprove them ſharply (but yet in the ſpirit of love and meekneſs) for the evil among them. So did *Paul* with the Church of *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 4. and ſo to the 15. verſe. So dealt Chriſt with the Church of *Epheſus*, *Rev.* 2. from the firſt verſe to the end of the fifth. And in the ſame manner he ſpake to the Church of *Pergamus*, *Rev.* 2. from the 12. verſe to the end of the 16. And ſo when he wrote to the Church of *Thyatira*, Rev. 2. 18, 19. *I know thy works, and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and how thou groweſt; for thy laſt works be more then thy firſt.* So having taken notice of the things commendable, and praiſed them for that, *v.* 20. in the next place (not the firſt) he

he reproves their evil, saying, *Nevertheless I have a few things against thee, &c.*

In this order, or method, I shall at present speak; not in opposition to, or denial of any way now in practice amongst the godly, and warranted by the Scriptures.

A Word to those that have taken to themselves the name of *Presbyterians.*

My Brethren,

MY hearts desire, and prayer to God, is, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto each of you the spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the knowledge of him; that you may be able to comprehend, with all Saints, what is the bredth, and length. and heighth, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God; I thank my God on your behalf, for the grace of God that is in some measure given to many of you already by Jesus Christ. God hath made some of you instrumental for the conversion of souls, by the preaching of his Word. And I my self must acknowledge, to the glory of God, and to your praise, that I have had many sweet and heavenly refreshments by your teachings, and solid discourses,

courſes, both in publique and private. In ſome things God hath enlightned me by you; and in ſome other things I have been convinced by you; and in ſome other things I have been confirmed by you: Theſe things I ſpeak by experience; and beſides, I have heard from ſome others, that they have alſo received the like benefits from the Lord by you. Again, many of you are men of tender conſciences, inſomuch that when you ſee but the very appearance of evil, you will abſtain from it. And the charity of many of you to the poor, is very large, as appears by the relation of many poor ſouls, whoſe bowels you have refreſhed; and appears alſo by your ſtirring up others to the performance of that duty.

But my Brethren, there are faults among you: therefore I have a few things againſt you.

1. Why do you ſo frequently complain againſt this preſent Parliament, and Army, ſaying, They be pulling down Magiſtracie and Miniſtery? Are they pulling down any ſuch Magiſtracie, or Miniſtery as Chriſt hath ſet up? Or elſe ſuch as Antichriſt hath ſet up, and acted his deſigns by? Let him that is ſpiritual, judge. If you examine our preſent Magiſtracie and Miniſtery by the word of Truth, you ſhall eaſily ſee, that they are not according to Chriſt, but to Antichriſt.

Firſt, Touching the Magiſtrate, I appeal to your Conſciences: Hath be been the Magiſtrate of God for

for good to thee, in countenancing them that do well, and punishing of evil doers? or rather, hath he not continually, for a long time, punished those that do well, and countenanced those that do ill? Herein will I appeal to the Sons of Sion to judge. Have they not banished, imprisoned, reproached, persecuted, despised, and contemned, and that to the highest pitch of their power, all those in whom the fruits of the Spirit of Christ have appeared in any measure? And is this a lawfull Authority, which we ought to obey? Then let us never account it blasphemy, to say, that the most wicked of actions are lawfull and just: for, is any thing less from the will of God, or more contrary to his commands, then this? Is not one unrighteousness as absolute a transgression as another?

It is worth your pains to examine what lawfull Authority is: and let us consider.

It is said Romans 13. 1. *The powers that be, are ordained of God.* There is no power (that is lawfull) but it is of God: for this is most true, that the most high God is to raign in the Kingdoms of men: and whosoever are his instruments in governing, they must derive their power from him, and act purely the command of God, and no more nor less, but even so; as it is recorded of the children of *Israel*, Exod. 39. 42, 43. *They had done the work of the Tabernacle as the Lord*

Lord had commanded, even so they had done it. And (therefore it follows) *Moses blessed them.* Wherefore were they blessed? Sure you see, not for their own inventions, but for their obedience, so purely and exactly after the command of God. And *Paul* saith, *Be not the servants of men:* that is, do not you observe the things that men do command, unless God hath commanded them. But you will ask, How may we know the true power from the false? (Oh that you were so teachable!) Then,

The Scripture will tell you, that the lawfull powers are of God, born of his commandments, and bearing his image, holy as he is holy; being a terror, not to good works, but to evil. And *whosoever doth resist this power* (onely this) *he resisteth the ordinance of God, and shall receive judgement to himself.*

But the Parliament and Army do not resist this power (spoken of by *Paul* to be obeyed) but they do resist (and I admire that you the Seers do not see it, that they do resist) that power spoken of by *Micah*, Chapter 3. ver. 11. *The heads thereof that do judge for reward, and that establish iniquity by a Law: the Priests thereof that teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof that divine for money; and yet lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord amongst us? No evil can come upon us.* That the powers of this

this Nation (that have been reſiſted) have been and are ſuch, their late actions are proofs; then which, nothing can be more full or plain to men of reaſon.

2. For the Miniſtery that are ſaid to be pulling down, What are they? Apoſtles from Chriſt, or from our Univerſities? Who hath taught them? God, or Man? How are they conſtituted Miniſters? By God or Man? A power Internal, or External? By the hand and power of Gods Spirit upon their ſouls, and in them; or the hands of fleſh upon their heads of fleſh, without them? They faſt and pray for them; but is it therefore certain that God doth hear and grant that particular thing? What is their Principle? The Spirit and living power of God, or the natural and carnal ſpirit of Men? What is their Knowledge? Of Faith, or of Reaſon meerly humane? Is it of the Type, or Truth? Letter, or Spirit? Form, or Power? Have they received it by Revelation, or Tradition? And what is the end of moſt of them? Is it not worldly honour and power, earthly riches? Will they preach if their Profit invite them not? Do they reckon themſelves rewarded, if they receive not money? Is not their cry great, and their labour extream for Mammon? Judge you. But theſe Miniſters are made ſuch, in a way of imitation. They ſay they follow the pattern of the Apoſtles; but is it ſo?

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The Apostles had a glorious spirit of light and power poured out upon them, mightily manifested in them, so that they were in an holy extasie, seeming as men drunk, filled not with wine, but the Spirit, that they plainly saw the promises and prophesies fulfilled in them; and the world also might see and say that God was in them, because of the works that were done by them. They professed and declared, that they had not their Doctrine of man, nor by man, but by God; they were not instructed through or by means of the fleshly organs or faculties of their bodies, or any fleshly or outward form; but they say, the Gospel of God is revealed in us *from faith to faith*; the spirit of God doth reveal it to us; we have tasted, and seen, and felt of the Word of life. *The things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God: but we have the Spirit*, &c. And now are the pourings out of the Spirit *upon all flesh* heretofore prophesied and promised, &c. By all which and other expressions of Scripture, which are many and abundant, it is apparent that the Apostles had a ministration of light, life, power and efficacy in them, which went forth by them in marvellous operations. Now they could with great boldness and clearness declare and preach the mysteries of the Gospel, because they had a clearness of sight of them by a proper demonstration and immediate manifestation; the Spirit of God dwels

in them, taught them plainly; and they certainly knew that he taught them: they had ſure experience as we, by our bodily ſight, have experience or knowledge that the Sun ſhineth.

But amongſt all theſe pretenders to the Miniſtery, and that appropriate to themſelves that Function, ſo diſtinct, as being the true and ſingular Apoſtle imitators, or as if they were thereunto anointed and ſanctified above the reſt of Chriſtians their brethren; Where is he that God hath made ſo diſtinct by any gifts or endowments, which either are comparable to thoſe or the Primitive Chriſtians, or do competently enable him to declare the myſterie of the Goſpel, which as ſpiritual, ſo deep and myſterious? Or wherein is he a Miniſter more then any ordinary Chriſtian? Nay, I will be bold to ſay. that if they that are called the miniſters, had but ſo much true light of the Goſpel revealed in them, as many private weak children of God, it would cauſe them abſolutely to be aſhamed to be termed miniſters; ſo unlike are they to, and untruly accounted ſuch. Can their humane wiſdom, and School learning, and Arts, which are fleſh, and of the world, unfold unto them the myſterie of godlineſs (ſo great?) If ſo, then the Apoſtle ſaid not truly, that God hath *hid* the things of his Spirit *from the wiſe and prudent* of the world, *and revealed them to babes.* And then alſo may *the natural man perceive the things of God*, though *Paul* ſaith he *cannot.* And

And now, if all your worldly and fleshly wisdom be no more to be accounted of, what then is your Ministery? What is your complaint and murmuring against the Authority of the Nation? What are they pulling down? Apostles of Christ, or Impostors of Antichrist? Shepherds that feed the Sheep, or Wolves that devour them? Do they pull down their Feeders, or else their Fleecers? Are they pulling down Leaders, or Seducers? May I not say to you in this case; as our blessed Lord said to *Nicodemus* in another case, *Joh.* 3. 10. *Are you masters in Israel, and know not these things?* Indeed they are pulling down such a Ministery as is spoken of by the Prophet *Micah*, Chap. 3. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, concerning the Prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and yet cry peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.* And in the next verse you may read their judgement at large.

Well then, will you be offended with the Parliament and Army, for pulling down such a Magistracy and Ministery as this? Let me beeseech you give over with speed, lest thou fall with them.

Again, my friends, I do admire that you complain of the badness of these times. Surely you do but dream: for if you do awake, you shall plainly see, that they are the best times with us in *England*, that ever we had, to live by faith. Wh

Hath the Lord with the beſom of deſtruction ſwept away the head of the enemies of truth, and yet ſad times?

What? Doth he take Princes and Lords, which were ſo high, and bring their heads ſo low as the Block, and yet ſad times?

What? Have the Saints in obedience to the command of their Father, given them to drink of the bitter cup, that they have given you ſo long, and yet ſad times?

What? Is the Lord making inquiſition for blood, and meting the ſame meaſure to his enemies as they have meted to his people, and yet ſad times?

What? Is the Lord magnifying the attribute of his Juſtice upon his and our implacable enemies, and yet ſad times?

What? Is the Lord pulling down the powers of the world, and the kingdoms of men, and ſetting up, or at leaſt making way to ſet up the kingdom of his own dear Son? And yet ſad times?

Hath the Lord proſpered our Armies, and given us ſo many victories over them that would have devoured us? And yet ſad times?

My brethren, I am afraid you did not mourn with *Jeruſalem*, becauſe you do not now rejoyce with her. It is true, unto ſome the times are ſad; but to whom?

Anſw. To the deceivers of our nation; for theſe times

times do discover them: and (plainly) it is a bad time for false Prophets, and corrupt Judges; for God hath threatned their ruin: it is bad times for *Babylon*, and all her brats; for the day of her destruction is dawning, and the hour of her plagues is coming: when Kings and Princes, Nobles and Merchants shall all lie howling, weeping and wailing, crying, *Alas, alas*, and all the Saints shall stand before the presence of their tender Father, *Singing, rejoycing, and praising the Lord for his Judgements upon their enemies.*

Again, You Ministers of the *Presbyterian* Congregation, me thinks you have lost your beauty; I do not see you in the affections of the Heirs of promise, the sons of *Sion*, as formerly: the cause of this must be in the people, or in your selves; and I have spent a little time, and made diligent search for to finde where the cause lies, and have with an impartial heart weighed the Saints in one ballance, and you in another; and I finde *you*, not *them*, too light. I mean, I finde the cause of your being slighted to be in your selves: wherefore, let me intreat you to take a word of advice from me: for I assure you, I have taken advice from you, and (I hope) shall again: though you look upon me as only worthy to be your servant, or scholar, and not your teacher; yet I pray you minde what *Job* saith, *He will not despise the counsel of his servant.* And if you will indeed hear

with your ears, treaſure up in your hearts, and practiſe in your lives theſe enſuing things, you ſhall ſoon grow in favor both with God and man.

Then there be four things that you muſt lay aſide, and forſake; and there be five things that you muſt immediately do.

1. Lay aſide, or leave off charging your hearers for breach of the *Scotch-Covenant*, until you have repented of your own breach of that Covenant; for how can you preach, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*, and ſteal your ſelves? How can you boldly reprove another for ſin, when you your ſelves are guilty of the ſame? How can you pull out the moat that is in your brothers eye, until you have pulled out the beam that is in your own eye? I will appeal to your very conſciences then, whether you be not breakers of the Covenant in the higheſt nature? For, ſaith the Covenant, *You muſt bring to condign puniſhment all Delinquents*: And you have often declared in the faces of your Congregations, beſides in your private diſcourſes, that the King was a Delinquent in the higheſt nature; and yet almoſt all of you were againſt the bringing him to condign puniſhment. Shall not many of the Army, which never took the Covenant, and yet had their hands in bringing Malignants to puniſhment, riſe up in judgement againſt you, which took a Covenant to do it, and yet above all men were againſt it?

If

If this be not a breach of Covenant, I do not know what is a breach.

Again, you covenanted to endeavour in your places, the Reformation of Religion according to the Scriptures; but if you examine your Church-discipline, by those Rules there held forth, and you shall see you have broken the Covenant in this also. And more I could shew you; but a word to the wise is enough. Oh my dear friends, do not you be like the Tribe of *Levi* in the days of *Isa.* Chap. 28. ver. 7. *They err in vision, they stumble in judgement.* I say, do not you be like them in their sin, lest the Lord make you like them in their punishment; and so speak to his people, as Isa. 28. 11. *With a stammering lip, and another tongue will he speak to his people.* And you that a little before were cryed up of many, as the only Ministers of the Gospel, now are made like to those prophesied of, Mic. 3. 6, 7. *Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the Sun shall go over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the Seers be ashameh, and the Diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their faces; for there is no answer of God.*

2. Lay aside, or leave off that cold luke-warm letter preaching, which seems to be only in the notion, received from the tradition, having a form

but not a power. Remember how it was with *Paul*; he compared *ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*; and moſt of you (for I ſpeak not of all) compare letter with letter, and ſo come up with a voice of words, ſo cold, that ſome of your hearers begin to ſleep, and others to withdraw from your Congregations; thoſe that do indeed attend to what you ſpeak, are profited very little by it. *O come then in the fulneſs of the Goſpel of Chriſt; and as you have received the gift*, (not ſtudied) *ſo adminiſter the ſame.* See what *Paul* ſaith, Romans 15. 8. *I will not dare to ſpeak of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought in me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed.* Again, 2 Cor. 10. 15, 16. *We will not* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *boaſt of things without our meaſure*; that is, of other mens labours: *We will preach the Goſpel, and not boaſt in another mans line, of things made ready to our hands.* Let me then appeal to your conſciences, whether this be your practice? Again, why do you tie your ſelves to preach onely ſo long, and not ſometimes longer, or ſhorter? Did ever the Prophets or Apoſtles do ſo? Why do you tie your ſelves to ſpeak onely from one Text, in one Sermon? Did ever the Prophets and Apoſtles tie themſelves conſtantly, as you do your ſelves to this? But think not that I write againſt preaching an hour, or ſpeaking from, or to a particular Text; for

for I am not against it: but onely this, your making ties where God doth not tie you, and cry up forms more then the power of godlineſs.

3. Leave off the Idolizing of humane learning, and uſe it onely in its place; then you will look upon it as convenient, but not of abſolute neceſſity: it will enable you with expreſſions, but not with ſpiritual interpretations. Never think that you know more of the minde of Chriſt then others, becauſe you know more of the Tongues then they. Alas I take all the learning, arts, parts in the whole world, and give them together into one man, yet this man by all his parts, wit, and arts, in Logick, Tongues, and Philoſophy, is unable to give a true ſpiritual ſenſe of one of the eaſieſt and plaineſt Scriptures. The ſpiritual myſtery is ſo high, he cannot reach it; ſo deep, that he cannot fathom it; ſo long, that he cannot meaſure it; and ſo broad, that he cannot comprehend it. Hence it is, that many in our days are great Scholars in humanity, and meer ignorants in Divinity. Was not *Paul* a great Scholar, as he teſtifieth of himſelf, and yet ignorant of Chriſt, knowing nothing of the ſpiritual ſenſe of Scriptures? Oh you Scholars, have you been ſo long at *Oxford* and *Cambridge* (the two eyes of our Land) and can you not ſee without Spectacles? Have you been at the Fountain & muſt the ſtreams teach you? Do you not know that there is a ſpiritual learning, as well

as a humane? If you do know it, why do you give a falſe interpretation of moſt Scriptures, taking them in the literal, when they are to be underſtood in the ſpiritual ſence? To inſtance in one for all, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *There are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned, wreſt, as they do alſo other Scriptures, to their own deſtruction.* Now the queſtion is, of thoſe things in *Pauls* Epiſtles, which *Peter* here ſpeaks of, as hard to be underſtood, and which the ignorant did wreſt: The queſtion is, What is meant here by *unlearned*; Doth he mean unlearned in humane, or unlearned in ſpiritual things?

Anſw. Me thinks the Apoſtle in the ſame verſe reſolves the ſcruple.

1. For firſt it is ſaid, *Paul wrote thoſe things according to the Wiſdom given unto him*; which is not meant wiſdom of the world, for God doth account that but fooliſhneſs (ſaith the Scripture) and *Paul* renounced it alſo, and ſaid, *I came not with excellency of words, or of wiſdom, ſhewing unto you the teſtimony of God*; *Neither* (ſaith he) *ſtood my Word and Preaching in the enticing ſpeech of mans wiſdom, but in plain evidence of the Spirit, and of power*; *that your faith ſhould not be in wiſdom of men, but in the power of God. And we ſpeak wiſdom, and not the wiſdom of this world, &c. but we ſpeak of the wiſdom of God in a myſterie,*

myſterie, even the hid wiſdom, &c. which the Princes of this world have not known, &c. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, which ſearcheth the deep things of God, and which We have received, that we may know the things that are given us of God, &c. Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which mans wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, &c. 1 Cor. 2. throughout; which you ſee doth abundantly teſtifie, that *Paul* ſpake not according to humane Learning. Read alſo *Galat.* 1. ver. 12, 16.

2. *Peter* here ſaith, that one of thoſe difficult ſayings of *Paul*, which the unlearned underſtood not, was this, *That the long ſuffering of our Lord is ſalvation*; which being a ſpiritual thing (as all the things of ſalvation are) cannot be underſtood by natural wiſdom; for the things of God *knows no man, but the Spirit of God:* therefore *Pauls* wiſdom was ſpiritual, and their unlearnedneſs there ſpoken of, was this; that they had not that wiſdom, in which he knew ſalvation; that is, the wiſdom of God: for worldly wiſdom they might have, and be nevertheleſs ignorant of all ſpirituals.

3. They were unlearned, that is, they had not the learning by which thy might underſtand thoſe things in the ſenſe which might tend to their ſalvation, or true knowledge of God; and that ſurely

ly is onely a ſpiritual ſence: for elſe to wreſt it to another ſence could not be to their deſtruction.

4. *Peter* here exhorts the Saints to take heed of that error of the wicked, leſt they alſo ſhould be led away with it; accounting it (you ſee) a wicked error: And then in the next place exhorts them to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Chriſt*, as being a thing contrary to that wicked errour, and a remedy againſt it. Now if the *knowledge of Chriſt*, and *growing in grace*, be a remedy againſt that errour, then it is moſt plain that their unlearnedneſs (which is there ſaid to be the cauſe of their error) was not of humane Tongues and Sciences; (for then *Peter* would have bidden them ſtudy theſe, to keep them from error:) But it was of the grace of God, and of the knowledge of Chriſt, they were ignorant and unlearned; and therefore he bids them grow in that grace and knowledge, that they might not err.

So that that ſaying of *Peter* being thus truly underſtood, it is moſt plain, that their unlearnedneſs which cauſed them to err, was their ignorance of Grace, and of Chriſt, not of Humane Learning.

To which alſo, let me add theſe Rules, *viz.*

1. That a mans principle by which he doth converſe with (or apprehend) any thing, muſt be of a nature ſutable to the nature of that thing which he converſeth with or apprehendeth: as in particular,

You

You cannot apprehend or discover an object of Sense by the principle of Reason For example, You cannot by your Reason (or any thing else, but your sense of Hearing) apprehend or know that there is any sound or noise, nor how it soundeth. But the ear and Voice are sutable; not a Voice and another Sense; as we cannot see a Voice, &c. Just alike impossible it is for Reason (meerly natural) to know spiritual things; as the Scripture saith, *The natural man knows not the things of God.* Nature hath not a power sutable to attain them.

Rule 2. Every evil or defect is remediable onely by its contrary good or supply: as Darkness is remediable by Light, Carnalness by Spiritualness, weakness by strength, ignorance by knowledge, &c.

Which two Rules (if you observe them) will help to the understanding of those words of *Peter.*

But if yet you are perswaded that your University-learning can dive into the spiritual sence of Scripture, I will propose to a whole Synod of your Function, to reconcile these Scriptures hereafter cited, that are in the letter so contradictory one to another. For instance;

One Scripture saith, *Thou must love thy father, mother, wife, children, &c.* Another Scripture saith, *Thou must hate all these, if thou wilt be my disciple,* Luke 14. 26. One Scripture saith of God, *Anger is not in me:* Another saith

faith, *He is angry with the wicked every day*; Psal. 7.11. One saith, *Ye do always resist the holy Ghost*, Act. 7.51. Another saith, *They could not resist the Spirit by which he spake*, Act. 6.10. One Scripture saith, *Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents*, John 9.3. Another saith, That *he that saith he hath not sinned, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him*, 1 John 1. 8, 10. One saith of *John* that he was *not Elias*, John 1.21. Another saith of the same *John*, that he *was Elias*, Mat. 11.14. Mat. 11.12.

I might instance in at least fourty Scriptures thus contradictory in the letter.

Now this is the thing that I would ask you; Whether through the understanding of Tongues, or Arts humane, you can give the true genuine sence of those Scriptures? Surely you cannot: for these Scriptures were penned by the holy Spirit, whose mysterious language the ear of man natural cannot hear, nor his heart conceive, much less his tongue express or interpret.

To conclude; you do ignorantly look upon your selves as so many learned Apostles; now considering that there are many *Aquila's* and *Priscilla's* that can teach you the way of God more plainly, Read and well consider that, *Act.* 18.25,26.

That place of *Peter* about the *unlearned* hath led me to a long digression. But now to return again to advise you.

4. Lay

4. Lay aside, or leave off your kindling of flames in the State, and blowing the bellows of contention and vain jangling, and fall to preaching the Gospel of Peace; Let the State-Governours alone with the State affairs; And also, let the Lord Christ alone with the Discipline of his Church. Let it not be said of you, as once it was of the High priests, that they were the onely enemies to the Kingdom of Christ, and yet the great pretenders to it. Do not reproach the Lord's people as once they did, for believing in, and following of their Lord Christ, saying, *Have any of* [us] *the rulers believed on him?* No, none (said they) but a few ignorant people that knew not the Law. Do not accuse the Lord's people in your Pulpits, as the Priests did *Paul*, Acts 24.5. saying, he was *a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarens*; lest the Lord's people should answer you as *Paul* did them, *Acts* 24. 14. *After the way which you call heresie, so worship I the God of my fathers, &c.*

So having spoken of the things that you must lay aside, or forsake; give me leave, as briefly as I may, to lay before you a few things that you ought immediately to practise; I say, immediately, because it is high time, if you have not staid too long.

1. If you be the Ministers of Christ, observe your

your Commission given you, *Mark* 6. 15. *Mat.* 28, 19. the summ of which is this, *Go ye to all the World, and Preach the Gospel to every creature*: And *Paul* elsewhere gives an account of his Commission, and saith Christ sent him to preach the Gospel, and so he went preaching peace by Jesus Christ. Seeing God in these latter days speaks unto us by his Son, *Heb.* 1. 2, why do you speak so much by *Moses*? You say *Moses* must prepare us for Christ; sure that is not in your Commission. Me thinks I hear you saying with *Peter*, Master, Let us build here three Tabernacles, one for *Moses*, one for *Elias*, and one for thee; and there appeared a bright cloud, upon the appearance of which, *Moses* and *Elias* (which was *John Baptist*) vanished away. And God answered *Peter* from heaven, and told him, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* Why do you then build a Tabernacle for *Moses*, and another for *Elias*, seeing the bright cloud hath expelled the dark administrations of them both?

O then follow the advice of Christ, and keep close to your Commission; and into whatsoever house you enter, let your first words be, *Peace to this house.* Luke 10. 5.

Why do you teach Repentance before Faith, seeing true and unfeigned Repentance is a fruit of Faith, not a preparation for Faith? The Ninevites believed God, before they proclaimed a Fast; and

and thou must first look upon Christ, whom thou hast pierced, by Faith before thou canst mourn, as one mourneth for his onely Son. The goodness of God will lead thee to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4. *And the grace of God will teach thee to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, Tit. 2. 11, 12.

Faith is a notable ground-work, in a sence, of true Repentance; without this Faith, it is vain to think to build up our selves in sanctity of life, and sincerity of conversation; For, *he that cometh to God, must first believe that God is*, Heb. 11. 6. And without this Faith it is impossible to please God: and whatsoever is not of this *Faith, is sin*, Rom. 14. 23. My friends, is not Faith the first stone in the spiritual building, the first step in a Christian race, the first link in our golden chain of Christianity, the first act of our new life, the first degree in our holy conversation, the first round in your *Jacobs* ladder, whereby you ascend up into the presence of your Lord? Should you not acquaint your hearers first with the doctrinal part of Divinity, before you press the practical part; endeavour to have them truly principled, and then press obedience, as the fruit of those principles? I have heard some of you say, that whatsoever obedience doth flow from any man, if it flow not from good principles, that obedience is in a sence disobedience. See what Christ commands, Mat. 12. 33. *Make the tree good, and*

[illegible] *fruit* [illegible]
[illegible] *corrupt* [illegible]
[illegible] Now here is the [illegible]
[illegible] fruit of all your labours [illegible]
[illegible] do so little good [illegible]
work in his own way [illegible]
for Order; and scarce [illegible]
more out of order then [illegible]
you require good fruit from a corrupt tree [illegible]
Christ tels you, it cannot be. When *David* [illegible]
his son *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. he instructs him
first in the doctrinal part, before the practical
part; he must first know the *God of his Fathers*,
before he is prest to serve him. This was *Pauls*
advice. *Tit.* 3. 8. Again, our blessed Lord Christ,
John 15. exhorts the people first to abide in him;
and being in him by faith, then bids them bring
forth fruit, saying, *As the branch cannot bear
fruit, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye,
except you abide in me.* So *Paul* dealt with the
Colossians, Col. 1. 9, 10. He prays and desires, first,
that they might be filled with the knowledge of
Gods will; and then *ver.* 10. (as the fruit of that
knowledge) *that they might walk worthy of the
Lord, being fruitful in every good work.*

2. The next thing that you should practise after
you have exalted Christ alone to be the onely
King, Priest, and Prophet, not in word only, but
in power; in expecting the teachings of God the
father

[illegible] not be ashamed to confe[illegible] [illegible] have been in the Pa[illegible] [illegible] so [illegible] [illegible] why will you not give [illegible] that liberty that Christ hath given [illegible] to judge of what you have said? Are you [illegible] to own Christ, when his Doctrine is examined? or else, do you find your selves unable by sound Doctrine to convince the gainsayers? But you will say, if any be not satisfied, let him come to us in private. Let me ask you, where have you a rule for that? Do you not deliver your things publikely? and do not the Scriptures tell you, That a publike evil must have a publike reproof? But you will say, we have done no evil, we have preached Christ according to our commission. Then (my friends) never fear to have it questioned; but (I beseech you) if any can object against what you have taught, so he do it in the spirit of meekness, rather to find out Truth, then to carp at Truth; And seeing Christ hath given him that liberty, 1 *Cor.* 14, do not you deprive him of it. If you would but make trial of this, I will assure you, you might gain many priviledges by it: In particular, I will shew you two or three.

1. You will take away all just occasions for

any to cavil at your doctrine, or speak evil of you in private.

2. You will encrease your own knowledge; for there are some *Aquila's* and *Priscilla's* do hear you: and you also may be more inabled to instruct.

3. It will make the lustre of the truths which you assert, the more beautiful, if you vindicate them.

4. It will make all your sayings seem the more worthy serious and sober consideration.

O that I could see the Ministers of *England* as willing to be taught, as they are to be teachers; as swift to hear, as to speak: Truly, this were a way to unite the greatest things we want in our Kingdom.

5. When you have exalted Christ alone, and diligently observed his Commission; next I beseech you, be tender of his Lambs, and feed them; and so much the rather, because they are yet standing in the streets of *Sodom*, and the dogs of *Egypt* do bark at them: Oh send forth no more dogs to snap and bark at the poor tender ones; for they have a tender Father, the Almighty Lord God, that doth take all the injuries done to them, as done to himself; and takes notice of all the hard sayings against them, as you may read at large in the Epistle of *Jude*, *verse* 15.

But you will (as I have heard you) say, We speak not against those that are truly godly; but we cry out against blasphemers.

So

So was our blessed Lord Christ persecuted and reproached under the name of a blasphemer, *Luke* 10. 33.

And so was *Stephen* (a man full of the holy Ghost, and of Faith) accused for a blasphemer, *Acts* 6. 13.

And they were great learned men that did this: and this was written for some to learn. Again, Christ was called a deceiver, *Mat.* 27. 63. and a Wine-bibber, *Mat.* 11. 19.

It would be worthy our labour to examine from the beginning of the Bible to the end, how in all ages, and under all administrations, the Priests, and Levites, and pretended Ministers, which would be known by the names of Prophets, Seers, Watchmen, or Leaders; and in this present generation above all others have had their hands in (almost) all the Wars, Divisions, Combustions, Uproars, Tumults, and Troubles in the kingdom. For matter of Blasphemy, Heresie, Superstition, Idolatry, &c. were not this Tribe the ring-leaders, as also in persecuting the Lords people? nay, the greatest opposition that our Lord Christ himself met withal, was from that Tribe; & have not they the chiefest hand in our present Troubles? I leave the whole kingdom to judge. Wherefore, my friends, consider upon what ground you stand, and upon what foundation you are built: and let it be your study to put out, not to kindle flames in the kingdom;

to heal the wounds with which we languish, not to make more. Remember these words of Christ, *Blessed are the peace makers*, Mat. 5. 9. I know this is the practise of some of you; but truly the number of such is but few; yet I do believe there are, and so in all former ages there were a few scattered up and down that were true Prophets, waiting upon God for an heavenly message; and that they do receive, and declare unto this Kingdom.

4. Seek not your maintenance in an unjust way; but cast your selves upon the providence of God, as for the salvation of your souls, so also for the maintenance of your bodies. Can you trust God with a soul, more worth then ten thousand worlds, and can you not trust him with a little earth, your bodies? You teach us to pray for *daily bread*; and you do well; but must you your selves take carnal care for yearly bread? If not, what means this bleating of sheep, and lowing of oxen? your pleading for Tithes in your Pulpits? O my friends! be ye sure to do God's work, and I will pawn my life for him, he will pay you your wages; feed his lambs, and your God will give you your meat in due season. O let the same mind be in you as was in your brother *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 15. where he renders three reasons why he would not preach for Money nor Tythes.

1. Because he would not make his glorying void, 1 *Cor.* 9. 15.

2. Be-

2. Becauſe he would not make the Goſpel of Chriſt chargeable unto them, *verſe* 18.

3. He would not compel any to pay Money or Tythes for Preaching, leſt he ſhould hinder the Goſpel of Chriſt.

How many ſuch *Pauls* have we in our days? Is there indeed one of a thouſand? Yes (my friends) there are, through God's goodneſs (to my knowledge) a few.

I ſpeak not this againſt a juſt maintenance for a true Miniſtery; for then I ſhould ſin againſt God and my own conſcience; for I know God ſaith, *he hath ordained that they that preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel*; and my own conſcience tells me, that if they have ſown unto me *ſpiritual things*, I ſhould not keep back from them *carnal things*. All that I here ſpeak againſt, is this, Your looking for your maintenance in an unjuſt way.

5. Give no offence unto any man, neither to Jew nor to Gentile, nor to the Church of Chriſt; but keep *a conſcience void of offence, both towards God, and towards men*. Be patient towards all; ſpeak evil of no man; ſeek the glory of God before your own honour, and the good of his people as your own good; and *as ye would that others ſhould do unto*, and ſpeak of *you*, *ſo do you unto*, and ſpeak, of *them*. In all your actions, propound Chriſt for your pattern; and learn of him, for he was meek and lowly.

Now to you called Independents.

I May say to you, as once *Paul* did to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 1. 4. *I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ.* Yea, I may say to you, as Christ said to the Church at *Ephesus*, Revel. 2. 2. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them lyars. And thou hast born, and hast had patience under all thy reproaches: for thou hast had many opposers, reproachers, slanderers, backbiters, and evil surmisings against thee.* If thou holdest to the end, and art willing to be a follower of Christ, as well in his Humiliation, as in his Exaltation; thou hast a fellowship with him in the one, as well as in the other.

Again, This I finde in thee (O thou *Independent*) Thou desireſt to walk by Rule. When thou wouldſt know the minde of God, thou lookeſt into the teſtimonies of his revealed Will, the Old and New Teſtament: Thou groundeſt what thou holdeſt upon that Word; thou accounteſt the principles & practices evil, that are not warranted by that Word. And if men come unto thee, and

speak

ſpeak with the tongues of men and Angels, thou wilt (with the noble *Bereans*) ſearch the Scriptures, to ſee whether the things they ſpeak of be ſo, or no: and if they ſpeak not according to that Rule, thou wilt preſently conclude, it is, *becauſe there is no light in them*; Nay, thou knoweſt, *That if a man come, and Preach any other Goſpel then that which thou haſt received*, Gal. 1.8, 9. *he is to be accurſed.* And this thou haſt alſo, (to thy commendation) the more others do ſlight, deſpiſe, and lay aſide the Scripture, as a thing out of date; the more thou doſt embrace it, read it, confer and meditate on it, and account it *ſweeter then the honey, or the honey-comb*, and *eſteem it* (with *Job*) *more then thy natural food.* Thou knoweſt right well, *they were written for thy learning.* Again, I may ſay of thee, as once it was ſaid of the Church of *Pergamos.* Rev. 2. 12, 13. *I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satans ſeat is: yet thou holdeſt faſt Chriſts name, and haſt not denyed his Faith.* Again, this thou haſt, that thou withdraweſt from every Brother that thou clearly ſeeſt to walk diſorderly: thou doſt reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-ſuffering. Again, this thou haſt; thou lookeſt to the ſpiritual growth of thoſe with thee: thy members watch over one another, and in love reprove one another; and many of you do it in the ſpirit of meekneſs, as you would that they ſhould do

do unto you in the ſame caſe, even ſo do you to them.

Again, this you have: You take a ſpecial care of the poor among you; and you lothe the unjuſt practices of ſome other Congregations of the *Preſbyterians*, that gather a juſt maintenance for the Poor in an unjuſt way; They cut large thongs, but it is of other mens hides; they do not with Chriſt, chuſe Deacons; but with Antichriſt, Collectors; Some of which may pay the Poor, and are ſure never to receive their money again, though they borrowed it for that purpoſe. But God be thanked (O *Independent*) thou haſt not ſo learned Chriſt; thou knoweſt well that *the Lord loveth a chearful giver*, and accepts none but a Free-will-offering; you give to *all*, but have a ſpecial regard to the *houſhold of faith*, according to rule, *Gal.6.*

Again, this thou haſt; Thou forſakeſt not the aſſembly of Saints, as the manner of ſome is; you hear the Word in publike, and build up one another in private. You do not (as ſome do) cry up the Publike, and contemn the Private; nor cry up the Private in contempt of the Publike. Thou lookeſt into the Goſpel, and findeſt both of them commanded and commended, and therefore makeſt uſe of both. Thou knoweſt, that as God is no reſpecter of Perſons, ſo is he no reſpecter of Places. Thou findeſt him teaching thee in publike, and alſo in private; abroad, and at home;

Thou

Thou findeſt him in the Fire to ſave thee, and in the Water to help thee, and in the Priſon to free thee; Thou knoweſt thy God is in all places, and yet comprehended in no place.

Now, having thus taken notice of the things commendable in thee, according to that Rule, 1 *Cor.* 1.4,5,6,7,8,9. and as Chriſt dealt with the Church of *Epheſus*, Rev. 2.2,3.

Give me leave alſo to deal plainly with thee, as *Paul* did 1 *Cor.* 1.11,12. and as Chriſt with *Epheſus*; and then I ſhall not ſpare to tell thy Congregations and Members, that there are faults among you; therefore I have ſomewhat againſt you.

1. If you be not guilty of that ſin that *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for, 1 *Cor.* 1.11, 12. I am ſure you are guilty of that ſin that is reproved, *Jam* 2. 2, 3, 4. *You have the Faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord of glory, with reſpect of perſons; for if there come into your Aſſemblies* (as *James* ſaith) *a man with a gold ring, and in goodly apparel; and there come in alſo a poor man in vile rayment, you* are apt to *ſay to him in gay clothing, Sit thou here* (*in a good place*) And though you do not in plain terms or words ſay to the poor, *Stand thou there, or ſit at my foot-ſtool*; yet you let him ſtand at a diſtance, or ſit at your feet. And *James* tels you, *Jam.* 2.4. *Ye are partial.* And many times thoſe poor ones whom ye ſlight, God hath choſen; and the rich ones

whom

whom ye honour, God hath rejected: *verse* 5. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in Faith?* &c.

2. You are strange to those that are called *Presbyterians*, which many of them being truly godly, you should visit; and if there be any way of wickedness in them, reprove them; if they be low in their principles, endeavour to raise them, and where they are imperfect in the way of God, teach them more perfectly: Love not one man, because he is an *Independent*; hate none for being a *Presbyterian*; for this were to know men after the flesh, 2 *Cor.* 5. 16.

3. There is utterly a fault among you, in that many of you do fashion your selves according to this world; if there be any foolish fashion going, ye are in haste to take it up with the first, quite contrary to the command of God, 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. And as in your apparel, so in your long hair; why do you Christians wear it like Ruffians? It is true, I know, that as Religion stands not in meat or drink; so neither stands it in cloaths, nor hair, long or short: But your abuse of this doth dishonour Religion, grieve the Saints, and harden the World; especially of the first of these, to wit, *Cloaths*. Therefore I beseech you hear a few words further.

Is your Kingdom or glory of this world or in things outward, or fleshly, or even in vanity? Is it

it your work appointed, and your delight (ye Saints) to please the irrational fancies of your fleshly minds? Can you who are so distinct and distant in your principles from the carnal and ungodly, so suit and conform to them in those things, whose very fountain, or cause, is none other but ignorance of God, which also are rationally censured even of those that are without? Have you no better enjoyments? no better kingdom then this? Is not your glory within? Is not the most Excellent your satisfaction? his presence in your hearts, your great refreshment? Union and conversation with him, your heaven and blessedness? Do you walk as Christ did, *whose meat and drink was to do the will of his Father?* Are you like him?

And seeing your fashions are costly, let me ask you, Do you believe that God hath given you so much of his creatures for any such purpose? Can you say to the Lord, *We bless thee in our souls that thou hast given us these creatures, and disposed our hearts by thy Spirit to use them thus?* Did ever God call such things, *Sacrifices well-pleasing to him?* Or have you the creatures in such superabundance? or are better opportunities so scarce, that you cannot better use them? do you think so? Then hearken hither.

Here are many of us miserable wretches, whose bodies pine for hunger and thirst, and strave with cold

cold: Some of us are exiles and strangers, some of us in prison, some of us sick, some wounded, lame, some weak, some widows, fatherless, and friendless. Here we stand before you; ye see us, ye know us: and can you yet with-hold relief? Have you no bowels of compassion? Hath mercy taken wing, and returned to her eternal Fountain that sent her forth? Hath she no tabernacle nor temple with men? Hath she left all hearts to hardness? Will she not vouchsafe us any of her divine bounty now, but leave us desolate captives to necessities, till they have pursued our flesh to dissolution? Where are the promises of our dear Redeemer, to dwel with men to the end of the world? When shall the *pourings out of the Spirit of Grace* (promised) be? Or where are those *Temples of his habitations*; that we may go unto them? Will no man shew us? Ah sad! O doleful case! Miseries devour us, and Pity is departed from us!

O dear friends! Are there all these cryes and tears, and yet do your vain pleasures bewitch you to be deaf? Awake, awake; for now your Lord commands, Go, hear what those my (and your) poor members say; see why they weep. *Lord, they cry for Want.*

Chr. What, want? and thou stand by with such rich stores of mine? O most unfaithful! most unkinde! Dost thou love me? and do I hunger

ger in my members, and wilt not feed me with my own, but imbezle those my stores to such base Harlots as thy fleshly fancies? Ah unfaithful wretch! Get hence; thou shalt not stay with me, nor see my face these many days. I desire you to consider whether Christ doth not speak thus to your spirits. But I have digressed, and now return.

4. This is also a fault among you, that you do not pity the poor blind world, and endeavour to bring them into the knowledge of the Truth, by laying before them the free love of God through Jesus Christ. All your studies are how to build up Saints: therefore to them you do altogether speak. Nay, I have heard Sermon after Sermon in publike, besides your practice in private; and you speak only to Saints enlightned, though most of the people to whom you speak, are in the old man, and have need of such a Sermon as Christ preached to *Nicodemus*. And so you are blameworthy as the *Presbyterians* are; yea, more then they: for many of them do teach the Practical part of Divinity before the Doctrinal, and you tel of great enjoyments before your hearers are truly principled. He that doth truly preach the Gospel, must preach to sinners, to convince them, as well as to Saints, to confirm them. If you will indeed be followers of Christ, you must not content your selves to preach a piece of the Gospel: for Christ, when he came among sinners, he was intreating

and

and perſwading them, and calling them to come to him, that they might have life: He often encouraged them to come to him; telling them, *he came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* He bids come unto him, *all you that are weary and heavie laden, and he will give you reſt*: And ſaith, *They that come to me, I will in no wiſe caſt off.* And when he gave his Commiſſion to his Diſciples, he told them, *They muſt preach the Goſpel to every creature.* Oh then pity the World, pray for the World; rebuke, inſtruct, exhort, perſwade, and beſeech them to be reconciled to God: your Father lets the Sun ſhine, and the rain fall upon them; and bids you learn of him to love them.

Do they revile thee? then with *Paul, bleſs them*, 1 Cor. 4. 12. Do they perſecute thee? Then with him, *ſuffer it*, 1 Cor. 4. 12. Do they take away thy *cloak*- give them thy *coat*. Do they ſmite thee on the *one cheek*? offer the *other*.

Do they curſe thee as *Shimei* did *David*? Then as *David*, let them alone; it may be the Lord hath bid them do it. To you is given, in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to *believe*, but alſo to *ſuffer* for his ſake: And how knoweſt thou, but that he will reward thee *good* for all their *evil*? If thou wer'ſt of the world, the world would *love* thee; but becauſe he hath choſen thee out of the world, therefore the World doth *hate* thee.

A Word to thoſe that go under the Name and Title of Anabaptiſts.

MY Brethren, there are theſe things worthy of commendation among you.

You meet often together; and when you come together, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God, as every one hath received the gift, ſo he doth adminiſter the ſame: You exceed in ſome ſort all other Churches, namely, in this; That you do adminiſter a right Ordinance to right Objects: You will do Gods work in Gods way. I mean, you baptize thoſe to whom baptiſm belongs; you do that which is required. And in ſome meaſure you do according to the command of Chriſt, 1 Theſ. 5. 14. *You warn them that are unruly; you do comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the weak*; and in ſome meaſure, *ye endeavour to have patience towards all men.* And when men begin to deny and ſlight Gods Ordinances, you withdraw your ſelves from ſuch. And this alſo is found in you, for which I commend you: You look upon the Scripture, as written for your learning, and therefore you often read, and meditate of it; you cannot bear with thoſe that ſlight it, and ſpeak reproachfully of it: you have experience, that God doth teach you by his word mediately, more then by immediate revelations.

But my Brethren, there are faults among you; therefore I have a few things againſt you; wherefore bear with me, if I deal plainly with you. Firſt, the Scripture bids you ſpeak evil of no man; why then do you imagine in your hearts, and ſpeak evil of the *Independent*, becauſe he will not be rebaptized? Why do you ſo judge the *Presbyterian* for baptizing children, to whom it doth not belong? They do not ſee by your eyes, therefore they cannot walk by your rules: Are they darkneſs in this? ſo once waſt thou. Doſt thou outſtrip them in this? it may be (nay I am ſure) they do go beyond thee in other particulars of obedience. Do they neglect the Ordinance of Baptiſm? that is their evil: but thou doſt reſt upon it, and this is thy evil: do they ſin in ſlighting Baptiſm? thou ſinneſt in Idolizing of it. Oh then be ſparing to cenſure and judge thy Brother.

Here is another branch of your miſcarriage; you ſuffer no man (though never ſo well gifted) to ſpeak among you; no, though he be able to teach you all, unleſs he be joyned to you by the Ordinance of Baptiſm with water: and though he be baptized with the Baptiſm of the Spirit, without which that of water is nothing, you hear him not.

Again, You often take Scripture in the literal, when you ſhould take it in the ſpiritual ſence. When Chriſt ſpeaks of the Baptiſm of the Spirit,

you

you understand it to be of Water. In a word:

You live much under the administration of *John*, who tels you, *That he must decrease*; but not so much under the administration of Christ, who shall *increase*.

Again, you make Baptism the ground of your communion, and so disorder what God hath ordered; for the ground of Communion should arise, first from that union you have with Christ your head; and secondly, from that near relation you have each to other, as being one in the same Spirit. In a word, your knowledge that you have one of another, is after the flesh. When will you be of *Pauls* mind, 2 Cor. 5. 16. *to know no man after the flesh?* I may truly say of you, as once it was said of *Apollos*, Acts 18. 25. *That he was instructed in the Way of the Lord; knowing only* Johns *Baptism of Water*; and surely you have great need, as he had, to have *Aquila* and *Priscilla* to take you aside, *and teach you the Way of God more perfectly, &c.*

A Word to those that hold *Free-wil*, and *General Redemption.*

MY Friends, some things I have observed from you, by my being among you; which I desire to learn of you, and for which I commend you; I have seen you bearing one anothers burthens, relieving one anothers necessities, according

to your abilities, often viſiting one another, with many outward expreſſions of the inward love which you bear to one another; theſe things ought to be done; and there are other things which you ought not to leave undone; as alſo, to love thoſe that are not under your Form.

Theſe Principles alſo do you hold:

1. That Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſome for all; and you prove it by Scriptures, 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. 1 *John* 29. 1 *John* 2.2. 2 *Cor.* 1.15.

2. That remiſſion of ſins ought to be preached to every creature: which proves the firſt, That Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for all; and therefore remiſſion of ſins muſt be preached to all: and that you prove by theſe and the like Scriptures, *Luke* 24. 47. *Mark* 16. 15. *Luke* 10. 5. *Iſa* 45. 22.

3. That every one is to believe the forgiveneſs of his ſins; for if Chriſt dyed for all, then all ought to believe the Goſpel. And that all are called upon to believe, you bring theſe and the like Scriptures, *John* 1. 7. *John* 17. 21. Now, if your principles drawn from theſe or the like Scriptures, be according to the ſpiritual ſence of them, you do well. So much for the things worthy of commendation in you.

But, my friends, there are many faults among you, for which I have at preſent a few things againſt you.

The

The first is, Your abuse of Scriptures; 1. In takeing them in a literal sence; 2. Looking into, and speaking of onely those Scriptures that seemingly in the letter do confirm your principles; whereas, if you rightly understood them, you would find the sence of one Scripture to stand with the sence of another; as to instance a little in the forenamed things.

First, you say, That Jesus Christ gave himself a ransome for all; and remession of sins is to be preached to all. Now compare those Scriptures with *Rom.* 8. 30. where he speaks of particular, not of general Predestination. So when he speaks of Election to the *Ephesians*, he points at a particular, not at a general Election. And when Christ prays, *Joh* 17. he prays not for the world, but onely for those whom the Lord had given him out of the world. And *Joh.* 6.44. There can *none come to him, but whom the Father draweth.* Read and well consider that one Scripture, which all of you are not able to answer, Acts 13. 48. *And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* I know what false gloss you put upon this Text, through your ignorance; You say the Original saith thus; *As many as believed, were ordained to eternal life.* And with this false sence you deceived me for a few days; but when I searched the Original, I found you lyers; for that word is truly translated;

and I have ſpoken with many poor ſouls that you have deluded with theſe and the like things. You ſay, Election depends upon qualifications; and bring theſe or the like Scriptures, *The Lord chuſeth to himſelf the man that is righteous*; never minding that other text, which ſaith, *There is none righteous, no not one.* So then, if he chuſeth none but the righteous, and there are no righteous, no not one; then he chuſeth none. *O ye ſimple ones, how long will ye love ſimplicity! and the ſcorners delight in ſcorning, and fools hate knowledge!* If this Text doth ſpeak to any ſuch in *England* this day, it ſpeaks to, and concerns you chiefly.

Did you never read with underſtanding that text which ſaith, that *we* (and all the Nations of the world) *are in the hands of God, as clay in the hands of the potter*, who *maketh one veſſel to honour, another to diſhonour as he pleaſeth?* And if there be any man ſo impudent to ſay, as I have heard ſome of you ſay, that then God is partial; ſee how *Paul* checks ſuch, in Rom. 9. 19, 20. *O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?*

If thou wilt know a reaſon why the Lord doth elect ſome to life, and to paſs by others, he is pleaſed to give thee no other account then this, Exod. 33. 19. *I will be gracious to whom I will be*

gracious; and I will ſhew mercy to whom I will ſhew mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth.

If thou wilt alſo know a reaſon why he will caſt ſome into the pit of deſtruction, and give to others life everlaſting: I anſwer, God hath no Rule to act by, but his own Will; ſo that for him to do what he willeth, is juſt: and it is juſt for no other reaſon, nor upon any other ground, but this, *viz.* becauſe it is his will to do it; and this is the juſtneſs of mans actions, to do what God hath commanded or declared that he will have man to do. Now, I ſay, this is the reaſon why he will caſt ſome to deſtruction, *viz.* to magnifie his Juſtice, or perform his Will determined upon ſuch as do tranſgreſs the Law given them; and for this cauſe is ſuch deſtruction juſt, becauſe it is that which the eternal Will or Decree hath appointed to follow upon tranſgreſſion. And after the very ſame ſort doth he exalt the attribute of his Mercy in the ſalvation of others. Read *Rom.* 9. and thou wilt find moſt of that Chapter ſpent in diſputing this very thing.

Another groſs error that you hold contrary to the Scripture, is this; That the ſoul is mortal as well as the body.

Again, you hold and teach, That if God commanded the Goſpel to be preached to all, and Chriſt died onely for ſome, then God commands a lye to be preached to the moſt part of men;

And that is Blaſphemy, to ſay that God commands a lye to be preached.

Again, You ground your own particular faith upon that General Redemption: and if your ground be falſe, your faith muſt needs be ſo: for no good fruit proceeds from a corrupt tree: And wherein doth ſuch faith exceed that of Devils, that believe and tremble?

You ſay, There is a power in every man to do whatſoever is commanded; a power to chuſe, and a power to refuſe. You cite that of *Joſhua*, and the like Scriptures: *Behold, I have ſet before you this day life and death, chuſe you whether, &c. Ergo,* (ſay you) the people have power to chuſe and to refuſe.

You ſay alſo, that upon your doing, or not doing, depends your eternal bleſſing, or everlaſting curſing; and yet (unleſs it be in ſome few things which I have foreſpoken in your commendation) you are the moſt unfruitful people that ever I came amongſt, except our new *Upſtart Wantons*, or *New Notioniſts*, (to whom I ſhall ſpeak next.) You ſpend the moſt of your time in ſpeaking evil of almoſt all other Chriſtians that walk not by your rules, and hold not to your errors: you backbite and reproach them with that bitterneſs of ſpirit, as is more ſutable to the principles of Heathens then of Chriſtians. I will forbear to ſpeak the one half of what I have been an eye-

eye-witneſs unto in this kinde, in that little time when I was among you. You ſpend your time to ſpie a mote in your brothers eye; but when will you pull the beam out of your own eyes?

Again, you hold that a man may fall from Chriſt, or grace: you have often affirmed, that a man may be a childe of God to day, and a limb of Satan to morrow; that he ſtands by obedience, and not by grace.

When he doth well he is accepted;
When he doth ill, he is rejected.

And ſo, by your errors, our ſalvation ſeemeth to depend upon Works; and ſo the Free-grace of God is nullified, and the obedience of Chriſt made of none effect; and in effect, you plainly deny Chriſt.

In a word, you hold more fooliſh, ſottiſh, unſound, unwarrantable, and uncomfortable points then any Sect; and your converſation is juſt anſwerable to your principles; ſo joyn both together, and behold their ill-ſhapen form and fruit. 1. By them both you diſhonour God. 2. You grieve his people. 3. You delude the world. 4. You cauſe the way of Truth to be evil ſpoken of.

Remember therefore from whence ye are fallen, and repent; or elſe the Lord will come unto you quickly, and fight againſt you.

A Word to the new Upſtart Wantons, *that deny Gods Ordinances: or* New Notioniſts, *full of VVhymſeys.*

MY Friends, I have ſpent a few days, and made diligent ſearch to find ſomething in you worthy of commendation, that ſo I might ſpeak to you, as I have to other Churches, taking notice of your Good, and of your Evil. But (my Friends) I cannot find any thing among you but Blaſphemy and Hereſie, and truſting in lying vanities. Therefore, as *John* ſaid in another caſe, 1 *John* 1. 3. I ſhall ſay to you in this caſe, *That which I have ſeen and heard, declare I unto you:* and what I ſhall now charge you with, I have been an eye and ear-witneſs of, converſing with you, and being among you. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaking to the ſeven Churches of *Aſia* by *John*, diſcovereth in each of them ſomething worthy of commendation; but when he comes to the ſeventh Church, the *Laodiceans*, there was not ſo much as one grain of goodneſs to be found in her: And yet this Church looketh upon her ſelf as the onely excellent Church, tranſcending all the reſt, Rev. 3. 17. *I am rich, and increaſed in goods,* (ſaith ſhe) *and have need of nothing: and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and poor, miſerable, blind and naked.*

Here

Here is thy ſtate to an hairs bredth, Oh thou new *Notioniſt*; Thou lookeſt upon thy ſelf as one gone beyond all others in high enjoyments, and that canſt live upon God without u'e of Ordinances, and worſhip God without Forms.

You ſay the Scriptures are not the Word of God.

Some of you have ſaid, The Scriptures wil teach you to lye, and ſteal; you ſay, God cannot be diſhonoured by any Action you do.

And ſome of you have ſaid, The reaſon why they will not be drunk, is, becauſe they would not waſte their money, and cauſe others to laugh at them, and becauſe it is hurtful to their bodies; but not for any diſhonor to God.

You ſay, That the Scriptures do not concern you; that it is onely a Declaration of the Adminiſtrations that others have formerly been under, and worſhipped God in. You ſay, There are an hundred and fifty lyes in it.

You deny the Reſurrection and the Judgement, and ſay, that there is no ſin in the world; but that all actions are alike.

You ſay, That the higheſt enjoyment and perfection that a Chriſtian ſhall have, is in this life.

You make your own wills your rule; and when you are carryed forth by them, you ſay you are carryed forth by the Spirit of God.

You ſay, there are neither Angels nor Devils, but an adminiſtration of life, and an adminiſtration

tion of death; or one of light, and another of darkness.

When you come together, you spend your time (for the most part) in jesting stories, and carnal merriment; and if any reprove you for it, you say you are carried forth to it.

You speak evil of others that wait upon God in the use of means; you call them *Legalists, Formalists, &c.*

Most of you despise to hear any Minister preach, though never so excellent a Teacher.

Some of you say, that you can make better Bibles your selves, then that which is made already; saying, this Bible is but the opinions of men. You call Prayer, & all other Ordinances, bondage.

You say, if one man kill another, it is God that doth it; yea. you can use deceit in your particular Callings, and say, You do no evil.

You care not for the weak, how you offend them; nor for the strong, if you grieve them.

And you, above all other Sects in the world, cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of; most of the offences are come by you: *Wo be unto you*, as the Scripture saith. The *Presbyterians* hear of your blasphemies, errors, and abominable things that you hold: and because some of you were heretofore *Independents*, and some *Anabaptists*, it makes the *Presbyterians* cry out so bitterly against the *Independents* and *Anabaptists*,

tiſts, thinking them to be all ſuch as you are; when I muſt needs bear witneſs for them both, they do hate your principles and practices, as they do the devil, the father of them. In a word, you have turned with the Dog to the vomit, and with the Sow to the wallowing in the mire.

Wherefore, if there be any ſparks of grace remaining in you; if there be any conſolation in Chriſt, any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies; then, oh then *remember from whence you are fallen, and repent.* Learn of the Prodigal Son, and come back again to your Father; for you have fed a long time upon husks, and your companions have been the Swine. *You have back-ſlidden from your God; return to him again; it may be he will receive you.* Seek meekneſs, ſeek righteouſneſs, it may be you may be hid in the day of the Lords anger. Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.

There are alſo another ſort of people, called *Millenarians*, who hold that Chriſt ſhall come, and reign a thouſand years upon earth perſonally. But ſeeing the number of theſe is but few, and their errours (for the moſt part) but in circumſtantials, not in ſubſtantials; I ſhall at preſent omit to ſay any thing to them.

A

A Word to another ſort of People that are under none of thoſe Forms.

THere are alſo a quarter-part, if not more, of the people of *England*, that are not under any of the aforeſaid Forms; neither *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Free Willers*, nor thoſe upſtart men of vanity and empty notions laſt mentioned; I ſay, They walk not, nor keep company with any of theſe, but at a diſtance.

And theſe are of two ſorts.

The firſt is a precious, ſweet, moderate ſort of men and women, looking after, and enquiring into the power and glory of Truth, and Godlineſs, more then the Form. They clearly ſee all thoſe to whom I have ſpoken before, to be in extreams, either towards the right hand, or towards the left, and for the moſt part, knowing Chriſt after the fleſh; Yet this ſort, not under Forms, look on thoſe that are under Forms for many of them, to be (as indeed they are) members of the ſame body, whereof Chriſt is the Head. Theſe men deſire to know no man after the fleſh; they love no man becauſe he is a *Presbyterian*, neither do they hate any becauſe he is an *Independent*. They deſire to have their *moderation known unto all men*, ſeeing *the Lord is at hand*. As theſe mens hearts are tender to all, ſo their purſes are open to all. They deſire

desire to be good, more then to be thought so; and esteem the power of godlines more then the form.

But secondly, There are another company, and these are the greatest part, that are under none of the aforesaid Forms, who look upon all the rest, and *count it strange that they run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of them all.* The greatest piece of these mens Religion is, to watch for the haltings of the rest. These men and women spend their time (for the most part) in gaming, drinking, back biting, railing at all others that will not do as they do. These will not joyn themselves with the *Presbyterians*, because they will not love them; they will not come among the *Independents*, because there they shall meet with reproof; they esteem their liberty more then their Religion; therefore they keep company with those where they may have their liberty.

A few Words by way of Prophecie to the downfal of Presbyterie, Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomians, Free-willers, Vain Notionists, *and all other Sects now extant in* England.

A Word in general to all the Saints, who are under any of the aforesaid Forms.

O All you servants of the most high and mighty God, heirs of promise, and sons of *Sion*! Look

Look for great alterations, and mighty changes; see what desolations God will make in the earth, and look for nothing but the Lord to be revealed from heaven, which will be mighty in his dispensation, and exceeding glorious in revelation, strong and powerfull in operation. He will bring to pass his determination, that is, he will *destroy in this mountain the face of this covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all Nations*, Isa. 25. 7.

If you ask what this vail is that shall be taken away;

I answer: There are many vails, whereof this is one, Thy knowing of Christ and Christians after the flesh. As soon as ever the Lord took this vail off our dear brother *Pauls* eyes, see what a change it wrought immediately upon him, 2 Cor. 5. 16. *Henceforth know I no man after the flesh, yea, though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know I him so no more.* Our looking upon men, and loving them because they are under this, or that Form, is a knowing them after the flesh *Presbyterians* look upon others of the same Judgement, worshipping God in the same Form, and therefore love them. But let these speak never so little against their Form, and presently they cast them out of their affections: And also the *Independents*, they know men after the flesh, much after the same manner. And

like-

wise the *Anabaptists* and *Free-willers*, they are vailed with the same vail. And therefore what I say to one Sect, I say to you all. You shall speedily receive a total Rout: You have gathered your selves together, but you shall be scattered, yea, you shall be broken in pieces. Lo, here is Christ (the *Presbyterian* saith) in the publike Ordinances, therefore highly esteem the publike Preaching, and frequent the publike Assemblies. Then comes in the *Independent*, and taking a strict view of the *Presbyterial* way, sees many disorders amongst them, and so separates himself from them, and joyns himself to those of his own judgement; and so meet in private, saying, in effect, Lo, here is Christ, Lo, here is Christ. Then stands up the *Anabaptist* in opposition to both, and saith, Christ is not with you in publike, nor with the *Independent* in private; but Christ is with us in the *Baptism* of *John*; Lo, lo, here is Christ. Then comes in he that holds *General Redemption* and *Free-Will*, and saith, Christ is among none of you all; for you do eclipse his free-grace, and limit his unlimited mercy: for he dyed for all, but you say it was but for some. 2. The Gospel is to be preached to all; but you say, though he preached it to all, yet he intended it onely to some. 3. Whereas we hold, that all should believe the remission of their sins, you say, none can believe but a few that are elected: but we hold, that as in the

first *Adam* all dyed, so in the second *Adam* all are made alive. So that, if any perish, let them thank himself; for upon his obedience or disobedience depends his weal or wo: and so God doth neither elect one, nor reprobate another, before he hath done good or evil. Lo, here is Christ, here is Christ, say the *Free-willers.*

And so all other Sects, Lo, here is Christ, saith one; lo, there is Christ saith another. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, *Behold he is in the desart, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.*

You have all built your outward house of external discipline upon the sand, and it must fall, because it is not grounded upon the Rock Christ: you have made your Communion the ground of your Union; and that must fall, because it is not the Lords, but mans building.

Quest. *But how do you know that Presbyterie must down; and Independency, Anabaptism, and the rest of the Sects must down?*

Answ. I answer, Christ told the Jews, *Joh.* 8. 56. *That Abraham saw this day, and was glad.* Now if *Abraham* by faith did see the day of Christ coming in the flesh, many years before he came; Why may not I and others see the day of Christ coming in the Spirit, to destroy all fleshly Forms, some few years before it be finished?

But if thou askest, *How shall I know that thou*

propheſieſt

propheſieſt true concerning the downfal of all theſe?

I anſwer thee in this caſe, as the Lord himſelf anſwered his people in another caſe, Deut. 18. 21, 22. *If thou ſhalt ſay in thine heart, How ſhall we know the Word that the Lord hath ſpoken, from the Word that he hath not ſpoken?* The Lord there anſwereth, *When a Prophet ſpeaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing come to paſs, it is from the Lord; if it come not to paſs, it is not from the Lord.*

Again, I have by faith ſeen all theſe opinions faln; and I have heard from many others, that they have ſeen them faln alſo. Therefore, *That which I have heard and ſeen, declare I unto you, that ye might have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son in the Spirit*: for then, and not till then, you will give over ſaying, as (in effect) you do. *I am of Paul, I am of Apollo, I am of Cephas*: Then you will not ſo much cry up a Form, but endeavour the Power of godlineſs.

Deliver thy ſelf, then, O Sion, that dwelleſt with the daughter of Babylon, Zech. 2. 7. *For the Lord ſhall ſlay Babylon, and call his ſervants by a new name*, Iſa. 65. 16.

A short description of a true Church-state, *or* Communion of Saints, *that shall stand against all Opposers.*

PAul writing to the Church of *Corinth*, beseecheth them in the name of Christ, that they would endeavour a perfect joyning together, in one mind, and one judgement: and good reason he had for so doing; for he well knew, that all joyning whatsoever that were imperfect, were not of God, and so could not stand. In opposition to all such imperfect unitings, or unsound communions, he dissuades this Church of Christ from pleading or standing for parties, and from saying, *I am of Paul, I am of Apollo, &c.* He doth in effect tell them, They must cease from knowing Christ and Christians after the flesh; for that must vanish. He doth perswade them not to build upon the sand; for that will fall. The Spirit of Christ doth exhort you to give over saying, *Lo, here is Christ*; *lo, there is Christ*: for that is unsound, and cannot stand.

That Communion of Saints that shall stand, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, let *the Winde blow, the rain descend, and the floods*

floods come and beat upon it, it will not fall; for it is founded upon a Rock; That Communion then is this:

A Communion that doth arise and flow from Union, I say it is a Communion of Saints, arising from a clear apprehension of their union with Saints, 1 Cor. 12. 13, 14. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free*: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit: for the body is not one member, but many, *ver.* 20. for now are they *many members*, yet but *one body*. Now when a Saint comes to see, that every one in whom the Lord Jesus appeareth, though in the least measure, is a member together with him in the same body, whereof Christ is the head; then his heart longeth to joyn himself in fellowship with such who have fellowship with the Father and the Son in Spirit, whether in Ordinances, or otherwise.

He considers, that he, and all the faithful under the whole heavens, have all one Father, all one Mother, all one elder Brother, all one calling, all one hope of their calling, all cloathed with the same Robe, all enclined to the same Work, all united by the same Spirit, all ruled by the same Word; and so he honours them all as the body of Christ, and nourisheth and cherisheth them all as his own body. Oh who can break the links of this golden Chain! Who can throw down this

spiritual building? No, no, *the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.* Read, and well consider that in 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, &c.* Or, as it is in the margin, *Be ye built up a spiritual house.* Go now through all the Shires and Cities of *England*, and enquire, nay, make diligent search among all sorts of people professing and pretending to Christ, for such a Congregation, that of lively stones hath built up such a spiritual house; and note that Church; it shall never fall.

Oh where is such an assembly of Saints to be found, as is spoken of *Ephes.* 2. 22. that are built together for an holy habitation of God through the Spirit? Shall I appeal now to thy very conscience, and ask thee, O thou zealous *Presbyterian*, Is your building, which is so much cryed up in *England*, such a Building?

Shall I appeal now to thy conscience, O thou *Independent*, and ask thee, Art thou built up for an habitation of God through the Spirit? Dost thou indeed offer up a spiritual sacrifice? Me thinks there is so much Truth in both the *Presbyterian* and the *Independent*, as to answer in the Negative.

Well then, Hence it is you love one Saint, and hate another, because you are not perfectly joyned

joyned together; you yet know Christ and Christians after the flesh; you have been joyned together in one Form, but not united together in one Spirit. But the day is dawning before you, and the Day-star is rising in you; at the appearance of which, your Communion shall be in the Spirit, as well as in the Form; and your love shall be to all, as well as to some, and when you are absent in body, (as *Paul*) you will be present in spirit, joying and beholding their Spiritual Order.

Now there are many Reasons why the Saints ought to be thus joyned together. Take two.

1. Because they are commanded to stand fast in one Spirit, *Phil.* 1. 27. And how can they stand fast in the Spirit, if they be not joyned in the Spirit?

2. Because that Worship wherewith they must worship God, must be a spiritual Worship, *Joh.* 4. 23, 24. 1 *Pet.* 2. 5.

And until Saints are thus joyned together, they are not fitly joyned, according to that, *Eph.* 4 16.

Neither until they be thus united in one Spirit, can they be said to have any fellowship of the Spirit, according to that, *Phil* 2. 1.

Again, until they be thus united in one Spirit, how can they yield obedience to that command, Ephes. 4. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?* And that they

might keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, see what powerful convincing arguments he brings, Ephes. 4. 4,5,6. *There is one body* (saith he) *and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Mark then (I beseech you) the Lord by *Paul* doth here lay down, 1. The union thou hast with him. 2. The union thou hast with his people; and from both these, as from the ground, he puts his people upon a sweet communion and fellowship, both with himself and his people. Upon this rock hath Christ built his Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against a Church thus stated.

But I have been in communion with all sorts of Professors now extant in *England*, and waded out of one Form into another; and at last I have clearly found, that much of their building hath been upon sandy foundations. I shall then shut up all with one Word of Advice to all.

O ye sons of *Sion!* behold your union with God; consider also that ye are one, not with some (onely) but with all the Saints, under whatsoever Form they be. Wherefore, love them all, pity them all, do good to them all; and as you are united in one Spirit, so let the Word and Spirit be your Rule. When you have gathered your selves together according to the order of the

Gospel,

Gospel, chuse to your selves Pastors and Teachers, Elders and Deacons; make use of all Gods Ordinances, but rest upon none; look upon them all but as Pipes and Organs through which he conveighs himself to the soul, &c.

Quest. BUt me thinks I hear some say, what Religion, or (at least) Opinion is he himself of, that hath written this Treatise? He can be no *Presbyterian*; for he writes against them: He is no *Independent*; for he reproves them: No *Anabaptist*; for he dislikes them: No *Free-willer*; for he writes directly against them. What then is he?

Answ. I answer, I am a Christian.

You will say, So are all the people of *England* Christians.

But that I deny; for though there are many Christians of mans making, yet there are few, yea, very few, of Gods making.

But you will say, What are they then, if not Christians?

I answer, There are many Heathens and Turks, Jews and Infidels, many Canaanites and Amorites, Perizites, &c.

But I am a Christian. This name was first given to the disciples in *Antioch*. I believe in one God, Father of all; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer

deemer of all, and in one ſanctifying Spirit of Grace; I believe that it is the Office of the Father to Elect; The Office of the Son to Redeem; and the Office of the Holy Ghoſt to ſanctifie thoſe, and only thoſe whom the Father hath Elected, and the Son Redeemed: And I do believe my own intereſt in all theſe; without which the knowledge of it is nothing. The Father loves me freely; the Son manifeſts that love to me; and the Spirit doth evidence it in me. The Father loveth me, as Redeemed by his Son; the Son looks upon me, and loves me, as being given by the Father for him to Redeem; and the Holy Ghoſt, ſeeing the love of the Father in chuſing me, and the love of the Son in Redeeming me, he alſo ſets his love upon me, and manifeſts this unto me, which is the earneſt of my inheritance. I believe that God hath his Being in himſelf, and gives Being to all other Creatures; and the cauſe why he made me, was for his own glory; and the end why he elected me in Chriſt, was, that I ſhould bring forth fruit to him: I know I am not my own, I am bought with a price; *Wherefore I deſire to glorifie God with my body and ſoul, which are the Lords.* I endeavour, as to love God, ſo alſo to love his people; not ſome, but all; and to love my enemies; deſiring to become all to all things, that I might in my place gain ſome. I do believe that I ought to give no juſt offence to the *Jew*, nor to the *Gentile*, nor

nor to the Church of *Christ*; wherefore, as much as in me lyeth, I endeavour to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards man. I love all, and yet I desire to withdraw my self from every brother that walketh disorderly.

I do believe that I am a servant of Christ.

I do believe I am a friend of Christ, *Joh.* 15.15.

I do believe that I am a brother of the Lord Christ, *Heb.* 2.11.

I do believe that I am in as near Relation to Christ, as the Wife is to the Husband, *Rev.* 1.9.

I do believe that I am a Member of his own body, 1 *Cor.* 12.12.

I do believe that the Lord takes all the evil done to me, as done to himself, *Zach.* 2. 8. *Mat.* 25.45.

I do believe that I am a Joynt-heir with Christ, *Rom.* 8.17.

I do believe that I am joyned to the Lord, and so one Spirit with him, 1 *Cor.* 6.17.

I do believe that I have everlasting life already, according to that, *Joh.* 3.36.

1. In the promise, *Fear not little flock, it is your Fathers pleasure to give you a Kingdom.*

2. In the first fruits, for what is Heaven hereafter, but a more full enjoyment of what is begun here?

3. I have everlasting life already in possession, by my head Christ.

I do believe that all this is but a taſte of what I ſhall be, according to that, 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2. *Now are ye Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what you ſhall be; but when he ſhall appear, ye ſhall be like him.* The ſerious conſideration of which, (I doubt not) will draw up my converſation more and more to be in heaven, even whilſt I remain here on earth.

I do believe that my ſins, by Chriſt, are taken out of the ſight of God.

I do believe that the deſign of Chriſt was to take it away out of my Conſcience, that there might be no more conſcience of Sin, *Heb.* 9. 14.

I do believe that as Chriſt hath taken away ſin out of the ſight of God, and out of my own conſcience; ſo in due time he will take away ſin out of my converſation, according to that Scripture, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. and *Luke* 1. 75.

In a word, I do believe, my ſins paſt, preſent, and to come, are all laid upon, and done away by Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53. 6.

I do believe, that as there was no good foreſeen in me, that did cauſe the Lord to ſet his love upon me; ſo there is no evil that can be done by me, that can cauſe him to hate me.

A Word to the Parliament, the Representative Body of the Kingdom.

I Cannot put a period to this little Volume, without one word to you who are Members of the High Court of Parliament. Honoured Worthies, you have begun well, go on, that we may find in *England*, that that was so earnestly sought for in *Jerusalem*, *Jer.* 5. 1. *Men executing judgement, and speaking the truth.* And then why may we not expect to be partakers of the mercy there promised, *A pardoning of the sin, and a healing of the Land?* Eye the Lord Jesus in all your actings, and advance his Kingdom, as much as in you lyeth: honour him, and he will honour you; and endeavour with *David* to deliver his Lambs out of the Lions mouths; for they are tender in your Fathers eyes, let them be so in yours: Your undaunted courage, in not fearing the faces of men, and your executing of Justice upon all offenders, without respect of persons, or partiality; as it is very acceptable in the sight of God, so the sound of it is very sweet in the ears of his People. And as the Saints in *England* have put up many Petitions at the Throne of Grace, that God would give you un-

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undanted ſpirits; and having by experience found God anſwering their requeſt by the late actings, as touching the King and Lords, they are now turning their Prayers into Praiſes, to the Almighty, for anſwering their prayers in aſſiſting you. And the more difficulty you found in the work, the more God will honour you for the ſame.

But, Right Honourable Worthies, What ſhould be the cauſe that the people of *England*, whom you do repreſent; yea, they that have choſen you, and have ever ſince with their lives and eſtates aſſiſted you; What is the reaſon, that they all with one voyce, ſince the death of our late King, are ſaying to you, as once the children of *Iſrael* to *Rehoboam* after the death of their King, 1 King. 12. 4. *Eaſe us of our heavy burthens, take away our Taxations ſo heavy*; and you have anſwered the people as *Rehoboam* did, if not in your words, yet in your deeds, ſaying, *My little finger ſhall be heavier then my Fathers loyns; and whereas you had a heavy yoke before, I will make it heavier: and whereas my Father chaſtiſed you with whips, I will chaſtiſe you with Scorpions?*

If you ſay, This is none of our anſwer or practice; let me ask you, what means the Exciſe, the doubled Contribution, and Free-quarter, and many other grievous Taxations, and Aſſeſments? And when we conſider the time in which you increaſe and continue theſe devouring Caterpillars, it doth

doth aggravate your evil, as well as our sense the Misery; as to instance,

1. In a time when our trading at Sea is spoiled and our Ships daily lost and taken.

2. In which our trading by Land is almost utterly decayed.

3. In which all sorts of provisions for the nourishment of our almost famished bodies is risen almost to a double price.

4. Though what little Money and Plate we had, we lent before upon the publike Faith, which proves a dead Faith, or at best but an historical Faith; for notwithstanding all Promises, we receive none of it back again.

5. In a time, in which many people are but as it were newly returned to their homes, after banishment for a long time from their habitations and estates, left to the cruel mercies of the adversary.

6. In which many thousands have had their houses burnt to ashes, and cry for help to their neighbours that have escaped that calamity.

7. And lastly, which addes to our misery more then all the rest; In a time when we expect a full deliverance, having by the assistance of the Almighty power, gotten the victory over all our enemies; so that we may yet lament in the words of *Jeremiah*, *We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for times of peace, and behold trouble.*

God hath put into your hands a power, if you have but hearts to make use of it, to take off these heavy burdens wherewith your friends are laden. Are not the Crown-Lands in your hands, and the Treasures thereunto belonging?

Are not also the Bishops-Lands in your hands?

Are not all the Customs in *England* in your hands, which amount so high?

And also Delinquents Fines and Compositions?

And yet must we have Excise remain, and Contribution doubled? Is this the reward that we shall have for all our obedience to you? O consider, consider. To reward us evil for all our good, it is not sound; and to make your friends your foes, it is not safe. Shall I acquaint you with what I know, and that upon sound ground? If the King had gotten the day, and all into his hands, as you have, would he not have freed those that assisted him, and have maintained his Army upon the cost of those that opposed him? Did not his practice begin to testifie the truth of this? So tender was he of those that assisted him in his extremity.

And will not you that profess your selves to be the servants of Christ, and favourers of his people, do as much for Christ, as he for Antichrist? Oh then! Oh then! let the cost light upon those that were the cause; and they that forced you to raise an Army, let their estates pay the Army.

FINIS.

XUM